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**By David Lodge**

Collins



offere a combination of conditions in which the most sober of citizens would agree, would even volunteer, to have adventures and to come face to face with danger and horrors and so on.

Capote has of course, whether consciously or intuitively, subtly modified and combined the components of the model: thus Capote himself in one way performs the function of Holmes—the outsider who is brought to the scene of the crime by a baffled client; but the client in this case is the detective, who thinks he has solved the crime but cannot bring the culprit to book. In relation to Pepper, therefore, Capote also plays the part of Watson, Holmes's naïve "friend," and the chronicler of the adventure.

D'Urbino, while readily accepting the aptness of the Security/Adventure analogy to the Holmes stories, regards it as one realization of a deeper structural opposition between Reason and the Irrational—Holmes's feats of detection representing the triumph of the former over the latter. In either formulation, the opposition is neatly encapsulated in the oxymoronic title of the story *O'Neil's analyses*, "The Sane Vampire" in which the Security/Reason) collide shockingly with those of Transylvania (Adventure, the Irrational) in a single phrase. Capote's title is a similar oxymoron, the honey, pleasant out-of-craft connotations of "handcarved" unexpectedly modifying the menacing and ominous "coffins." And the sequence of violent deaths that Jake Pepper relates to Truman Capote, as a hard wind whipping the window panes, is certainly a challenge to reason:

JAKE: Eight murders, and not a single clue that would link the victims together to produce some semblance of a motive. Nothing. Except those three little hand-carved coffins. I said to myself: No! No, it can't be. There's a mind behind all this, a reason.

The first to die were a married couple called Robert and Mary and his wife who worked for him. One day they received through the mail a miniature coffin carved from balsam wood, containing a snapshot of themselves. A month later, getting into their car one sunny morning to drive to the office, they were attacked by a mysterious injected rattlesnake. They were found dead inside the car, hideously swollen and disfigured. He was the first victim of empirical doubt makes itself felt. The account implies that both people entering the car simultaneously from opposite sides, got inside and shut both doors before either of them noticed the amphetamine-crazed snakes. That seems improbable, to say the least. Later in the text we are told that the Robert died on September 5, 1970. Doing a little detective work of my own, I discovered that that date fell on a Saturday. I suppose it is possible that a country lawyer and his wife-asstent might go to their office on a Saturday morning, though it is unlikely; less likely still that a murderer, setting a trap for them as they leave for work, should choose a Saturday, rather than an ordinary weekday, for the attempt.

Three months later, a couple called Baxter were burned to death in their car, with two chance guests, by an act of arson. It was not known whether they had received a coffin. But Clem Anderson, an old college friend of Jake's, did receive one, with a picture of himself driving his home-made jeep, and was frightened by it. He was unable to think what connection it might have with the other victims. Until one evening he tells Jake that the local river, and the next day, before he has time to simplify this, he is dead, decapitated by a shrapnel wire strung across the road along which he drives home in his jeep, a vehicle without superstructure or windshield.

Appears from the implausibility of the model of talking working with such perfect precision, and the paternity of its timing, the personal bond between Jake and Anderson provides a conspicuously literary motivation for Jake's increasingly agonized reluctance to solving the mystery. The next victim, however, is a rather unattractive character, a doctor poisoned by pictorial art. At the point in his narrative, Capote returns to the theme of the man he suspects. When he finally gets back he learns that Addie was driven away before her wedding day—suddenly, according to the story.

Quinn, however, avoids giving away clinching proof. He is obsessed with the desire to catch him, is constrained to use his beloved fiancée as bait. Instead of removing her from danger, Truman Capote goes to Europe for a vacation, and his return is delayed. When he finally gets back he learns that Addie was driven away before her wedding day—suddenly, according to the story.

describer Quinn perfectly". There must be some superstition about the letter "Q", so many nasty, malicious, detestable characters in literature have names that begin with it: Quilp, Quint, Quilly.

Jake Pepper's name has appropriately contrasting connotations—country and western homeliness, a warm but volatile temperament.

Having mentioned the suspect's name, Jake Pepper refuses to proceed any further with his narrative until the next day, when he has arranged to take Truman Capote to meet a woman called Addie Mason in the town. Thus Capote's and vicariously the reader's, curiosity and suspense are prolonged. The scene shifts to the comfortable house of Addie, a spinster schoolmistress, and her walled altar (this shift corresponds to the movement from Baker Street to the country in the Sherlock Holmes stories). A sumptuous meal is served, and again an atmospheric contrast is evoked between the cosy interior and the inhospitable exterior where somewhere the murderer lurks. "Snow, fluttering at the windows like torn lace curtains, emphasized the comforts of the room, the warmth of the fire, the redness of the wine," Addie describes to Capote how she received a coffin, sought the help of Jake Pepper, and worked out the connection between herself and other victims: all had been members of a local committee formed to adjudicate on a proposal to divert the local river for irrigation purposes. This property owner who lost most by their approval of the scheme was Robert Quinn.

As this narrative proceeds, Truman Capote infers that Jake and Addie are in love, and he learns shortly after that they plan to marry. Thus the threatened next victim of the murderer whom Jake is pursuing is the very person dearest to him in the world. This doubling of the motivation, superimposing a romantic theme on top of the law-and-order theme is typical of traditional prose fiction, of what is sometimes called the classic realist text. It is the literary equivalent of Freudian "overdetermination," and betrays an anxiety on the author's part to hold the reader's interest at all costs, by providing an excess of reasons for our sympathetic identification with the "good" characters. It comes as no surprise to discover that, to contrast to Addie's homely look and wholesome personality, Quinn's wife is embittered, alcoholic, and half-Spanish; or, later, that he has a mistress and four illegitimate children.

Pepper soon drives Capote out to Quinn's ranch. It seems that in spite of all the grounds for suspicion, Pepper has not succeeded in convincing his superior that Quinn is the murderer. The only clue being the Robert died on September 5, 1970. Doing a little detective work of my own, I discovered that that date fell on a Saturday. I suppose it is possible that a country lawyer and his wife-asstent might go to their office on a Saturday morning, though it is unlikely; less likely still that a murderer, setting a trap for them as they leave for work, should choose a Saturday, rather than an ordinary weekday, for the attempt.

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Quinn, however, avoids giving away clinching proof. He is obsessed with the desire to catch him, is constrained to use his beloved fiancée as bait. Instead of removing her from danger, Truman Capote goes to Europe for a vacation, and his return is delayed. When he finally gets back he learns that Addie was driven away before her wedding day—suddenly, according to the story.

verdict. Jake is of course convinced that Quinn was responsible, though Truman Capote, for reasons that are not entirely clear, is not. This causes an estrangement between the two men, as Jake is crazily isolated and on the edge of breakdown, bangs his head against the brick wall of public scepticism and indifference. The narrative frays out into a series of notes and jottings from Capote's diary covering a number of years, until eventually Jake is due for retirement, his quest unfulfilled. Truman Capote reveals to the small Western town for a farewell reunion, and then makes a solitary visit to the Quinn ranch. There he finds Quinn fishing his river, thigh-deep in water, like the fanatical preacher, and like him also in being convinced of the consonance of his own will and God's.

"This way I look at it," says Jake. "It was the hand of God." He raised his own hand, and the river, viewed between his spread fingers, seemed to weave between them like a dark ribbon. "God's work. His will."

That is how the story ends; the image of the river, delicately alluding to the classical mythology of the Styx and the Fates, offers an aesthetic conclusion in place of a narrative resolution of the plot. In this respect, of course, "Hand-carved Coffins" deviates radically from the classic detective story, in which all mystery is dispersed, Reason triumphs over the Irrational, and Right over Wrong. "Hand-carved Coffins" ends with the cult still at large, triumphant and invulnerable, while the just man, Jake Pepper, is left broken and disillusioned.

Perhaps it is the consonance of this ending with the cynicism and despair of contemporary Americans that explains why American reviewers of "Hand-carved Coffins" have, as far as I can ascertain, either accepted its claim to be a true story, or expressed only tentative doubts. James Wolcott, in the *New York Review of Books*, for instance, wrote "you be under whether fact and fiction don't meet bubbling together in the same pot." Professor Weber writes that Philip Roth's remark that "the American writer in the middle of the twentieth century has his hands full in trying to understand, and then make credible, much of the American reality." Truth is so much stranger than fiction, these days, that the reading public will apparently give credence to the most hackneyed and sentimental stereotypes of fiction masquerading as fact.

It is certain that no intelligent

reader would believe that "Hand-carved Coffins" was a true story for a moment if it were not subtitled a nonfiction account. (A phrase that borrows considerably from the precedent of the same author's *In Cold Blood*) and described as a "true story" by its publishers—for one does not expect dust-jacket blurbs to lie. I thought it prudent to inquire of the British and American publishers whether they had any evidence to support this assertion, and received courteous but guarded replies to the effect that they had relied exclusively on the assurances of the author. They have been very trusting. Of course, as a property, "Hand-carved Coffins" is worth a lot more as a true story than as a work of fiction; which is to say that as a work of literature with its own will and God's.

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That is how the story ends; the image of the river, delicately alluding to the classical mythology of the Styx and the Fates, offers an aesthetic conclusion in place of a narrative resolution of the plot. In this respect, of course, "Hand-carved Coffins" deviates radically from the classic detective story, in which all mystery is dispersed, Reason triumphs over the Irrational, and Right over Wrong. "Hand-carved Coffins" ends with the cult still at large, triumphant and invulnerable, while the just man, Jake Pepper, is left broken and disillusioned.

Perhaps it is the consonance of this ending with the cynicism and despair of contemporary Americans that explains why American reviewers of "Hand-carved Coffins" have, as far as I can ascertain, either accepted its claim to be a true story, or expressed only tentative doubts. James Wolcott, in the *New York Review of Books*, for instance, wrote "you be under whether fact and fiction don't meet bubbling together in the same pot." Professor Weber writes that Philip Roth's remark that "the American writer in the middle of the twentieth century has his hands full in trying to understand, and then make credible, much of the American reality." Truth is so much stranger than fiction, these days, that the reading public will apparently give credence to the most hackneyed and sentimental stereotypes of fiction masquerading as fact.

It is certain that no intelligent reader would believe that "Hand-carved Coffins" was a true story for a moment if it were not subtitled a nonfiction account. (A phrase that borrows considerably from the precedent of the same author's *In Cold Blood*) and described as a "true story" by its publishers—for one does not expect dust-jacket blurbs to lie. I thought it prudent to inquire of the British and American publishers whether they had any evidence to support this assertion, and received courteous but guarded replies to the effect that they had relied exclusively on the assurances of the author. They have been very trusting. Of course, as a property, "Hand-carved Coffins" is worth a lot more as a true story than as a work of fiction; which is to say that as a work of literature with its own will and God's.

"This way I look at it," says Jake. "It was the hand of God." He raised his own hand, and the river, viewed between his spread fingers, seemed to weave between them like a dark ribbon. "God's work. His will."

## The accosters' last stand

By George Craig

RAYMOND QUENEAU. *We always treat women too well.* Translated by Barbara Wright. 174pp. Calder. £8.95. 0 7445 3687 3

When a clever man translates into humour his fascination with the possibilities of words, and few writers have done so as often and as engagingly as Raymond Queneau. We read, gratefully, if a little too soon, to assume that we know where we are in the world of what are called language-games. Secure in our knowledge, we set aside all questions of context and charge. This is a danger which Queneau's *We always treat women too well* illustrates with peculiar sharpness.

A post office carefully plotted on the map of Dublin streets and monuments to the time of George V, has been forcibly taken over by a bunch of characters with strangely familiar names: among them Corry Kelleher, Basil Dillon, Larry O'Rourke and Chris Callahan. But of course it is Bloom's day a few years on and "anything can happen and probably will" (the very mention of Joyce justifying for the translator) and every kind of word-play, pun, and allusion the novelist has chosen to play for his fiction, the activities of an armed gang which holds prisoner a frightened (although in this case not necessarily respectable) victim. It

is an intentional or Freudian allusion, it seems a significant clue that the origins of "Hand-carved Coffins" are in fiction, rather than in fact, as does the allusion to Agatha Christie, whose *Ten Little Niggers* (originally *Ten Little Niggers*) has a similar so-many-down-so-many-go plot. The muddled reference to Graham Greene (he was converted to Roman Catholicism, if that is what is meant by "grabbed by the Vatican" in 1925; Brighton Rock, 1938, was in fact the first of his novels to deal explicitly with Catholicism; his next novel, *The Power and the Glory*, was actually condemned by the Holy Office) is of less obvious relevance. But the final derisive comment on writers of fiction is plainly a nudge aimed at the credulous reader. Only the scannet conceals the author's grin.

The title story of *Music for Chameleons* describes a conversation between Truman Capote and a patrician lady of Merit. Chameleons scampers about the terrace where they sit, slipping obliquely between the two. She comments: "Such exceptional creatures. The way they change colour. . . . And did you know they are very fond of music. . . . You don't believe me?" She goes to the piano in her "cool, Caribbean salon" and begins to play. Sure enough, the chameleons accosts at her feet, "a sensitive, absorbed audience for the music". But of course this "proof" is purely a literary illusion, dependent on the credibility of Capote's own text. As if to reinforce the point, he himself claims a few lines later to have seen ghosts in Haiti in broad daylight, "picking bugs off coffee plants". She accepts this as fact. *Music for Chameleons* is indeed full of tall stories asking to be accepted as fact, full of characters who enjoy testing each other's credulity, and their own narrative persuasiveness. Thus Marilyn Monroe tells Truman Capote a story about Errol Flynn taking his penis out of his fly at a party and thumping out the tune of "The Star Spangled Banner" with it on the piano, while he counters with a reminiscence of having once seduced Flynn. "That's not much of a story," says Marilyn. "Not worth more than a long shot." By "her" entry she means not the one about Flynn, but the one about herself and Arthur Miller, which Capote is trying to wink out of her. But by "worth" she also means equivalent in scandalous truth or equivalent in narrative interest, the "pleasure of the text". That is the distinction Capote tests the reader with throughout *Music for Chameleons*, thus making out of some fairly lightweight writing, a book that continuously beguiles, and that lingers in the mind.

There is no such book as *A Coffin for Dimitrios* by Eric Ambler, though he did write one called *The Mock of Dimitrios* (which has no miniature coffins in it, though it does come involved in a "real" murder mystery through a policeman acquaintance). Whether this title

appears fairly conclusively, that this must be a pastiche of the genre exemplified by *Nin Orchids* for *Mia Blomfield*. Killings, meetings and sexual outrages, there is also, finally, the blank-cheque notion of "black humour".

Queneau's seven armed robbers storm a post office, the corner of O'Connell Bridge, a few hundred yards from the better-known one. They shoot the commissionaire and the superintendent, driving out the other employees with bomb and rifle. The section leader telephones the GPO; the rebel code-word is at once answered; the first stage of the Rising is over. The insurgents, elated and nervous, prepare for the British counter-attacks. This comes first from troops regrouped nearby, later from a warship ordered to bombard the city. A ruthless enemy hidden within the post office itself. We read the account of the rebels' last stand and of their fading, before an assault that comes from in front and from behind, from above and below. Nothing and no-one is left intact.

Assumptions that all this must be "satire, pastiche" or "inspired romp" block access to real difficulties and real delights. Why Ireland in 1916? Why is the leader of the (rebel) band called John McCormack? And why is his battle-cry "Finnegans Wake"? Even the names to the points, what was the player-for-safety? Intending to do as the rebels did, under the pseudonym "Sally Mary", it would surely have enjoyed

answers to these questions. But Queneau offers full and disarming answers.

He does this partly by turning the questions back to us: if we accept that, in order for the rebel heart of a Western to get the girl in white, a couple at a dinner in Indiana have to be shot off their horses, why can't we do the same or similar with an insurrection? He does it also by exploring the gap between ideological certainty and personal doubt. For if anything is being mocked in the novel, it is the pretension to know. Queneau's wide sureness of linguistic touch and his compassionate tone remind us, humbly and humbly, of the heroism, brutality, devotion and love itself are debasement; names are really all right, but from the outside. The inside, or what these events feel like to their protagonists, asserts a different reality, one which coincides with the only at moments and as if by accident. If armed, by towards Truman, we've seen, above that there's more than a trick, or Bro's slave. If, up at street level in the little post office, history is laying a new course, downstate, the Ladies a terrible beauty is lying, about to come and put her hand on the ruler.

Obecancy and tenderness, subtlety and violence, for reader not immediately put off by the mixture, there is in Queneau's novel the chance of a deliciously moving, enormously funny scene. The translator's bold on the colloquial may be a bit under the mark, but it is a novel that Flann O'Brien would surely have enjoyed.

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## Bald-headed into battle

By John Keegan

JOHN TERRAINE

The Smoke and the Fire  
Myths and Anti-Myths of War 1861-1945  
240pp. Sidgwick and Jackson. £8.95.  
0 283 98701 4

John Terraine ploughs a lonely furrow. Alone among precisising military historians, he is resolved to present the First World War (which is what this book is about, despite the title) as something to be confronted and understood rather than evaded or deplored. Gentler souls, with a foothold in social or cultural history, may regret the file it wrote to the belle époque, their generalist colleagues bewail its catastrophic political consequences, the strategic professionals recoil from its brutal distortion of the soldier's craft. He will have none of it. Like the war itself, he bestrides the years 1914-18, claiming that all who pass that way must learn to turn on the Unlucky for-Truth his own basillak stare. He has had to develop a thick skin as well as a hard eye, for his views are not merely unfashionable: they are provocatively uncomfortable, provocative because he has the gift of disputation, uncomfortable because he is often right, or at least less wrong than his opponents.

Terraine and his adversaries have tussled over a wide range of issues, some large, some small. In the twenty years he has been writing about the war, The largest stir he caused was with his life of Haig, whose reputation he attempted not merely to rescue, but to lucidly and dauntingly to reconstruct. Patient work with documentary sources produced a portrait of the commander of the BEF which

undoubtedly had authority; and, over time, patience has had its effect. Few Haig-haters, it is true, have been brought to like the field-marshal, and it is not altogether certain that even his biographer does. But it is not a new-day uncommon to hear it said, however grudgingly, that Haig was no worse a general than many of his contemporaries, while the task he faced was a good deal less susceptible to intellectual or imaginative solutions than he has commonly been allowed. Lloyd George's reputation as a war leader has been dented by John Terraine's demonstration of his strategic naivety, readiness to be impressed by untold generals' claims of heroism and fustian for the back-staircase deal in military as well as in political affairs. Postwar Haig now appears less awful as a battle commander, but he has shown it to be less costly than the Somme, and the Somme less pointless because he succeeded in diverting attention from his first, unspeakably horrible day.

But he now seems to have tired of making this sort of step-by-step advances in the history of the war to which Haig bound the BEF in Flanders in the summer of 1917. In his latest book we find him, booted and spurred for a bold-headed charge into the thick of his enemies' ranks, and not just at a point in their line but up and down the whole length. Do they deny that the Germans were guilty of atrocities in Belgium and the northern départements in 1914? They may not have hung priests' heads down roads as cleppers to their own bulls, but they unquestionably burnt the historic centre of Louvain in a public reprisal and shot over 600 civilians in the Orléans. Do they insist that the First World War was the costliest ever fought? Neither absolutely nor relatively is that the case: Second-World-War deaths were more numerous, American Civil War deaths higher as a proportion of mobilized manpower.

Will they still peddle the idea that there was some "war room" in the Western Front? Then please show where, and also adduce examples of other major wars won by subsidiary operations. Do they believe that the British high command flung away the Kitchener armies, flower of the nation, in 1916, for no measurable reason? Then add Germany's casualties on the Somme and read her high command's lament for them.

Are we still to accept that the machine-gun was the great killer, but that Haig misapplied its effectiveness? Study the hospital statistics and note that sixty per cent of wounds were caused by shellfire, but also note that Haig commended pressed for more machine-guns. Did he spurn the idea of the tank and miss those which were pressed upon him? His private diaries reveal his enthusiasm for the prototype and eagerness to see it produced in number; the production model's imperfections explain its limited effectiveness. Were all British generals covetous, with a lip and an eye for horseflesh? Only eight of the "top twenty-seven" were from the cavalry and, of them, the topmost were the most efficient and innovative of the war. Good as the cavalry was, it was not the whole war, and it was not the whole war. The whole war was a struggle, both in method and object. Demonstrate another method which might have worked. And demonstrate the terms imposed by the Germans on those countries, like Russia, Serbia and Romania, which they did best.

Hard pounding this, and a lot of the shots go home. The machine-point is accurate. If of little consolation, the statistically un-lucky. The tank point is right in every respect. Were it only for the spousal of the invention, Haig would stand tall beside Ludendorff, whose persistence in traditional

ways of warfare was stubborn in the politics of obfuscation. The trench stories are very properly resurrected. Some German formations undoubtedly believed with a crazy savagery in the first weeks of the war, particularly in Belgium which by comparison with the Fatherland, was indeed poor and little. And the terms of the treaty of Trest-Litovsk, which gave Germany as much of Russia as Hitler took by conquest in 1941-42, bear very serious thinking about by anyone who dismisses the First World War as "unnecessary", particularly if we accept Fritz Fischer's argument that they were duplicit in their war aims from the beginning (unt, curiously, one that the author cites to support his case).

But some of the shots are wide of the mark. Juggle with the figures how you like, the British army of 1914-18 was dominated by the cavalry, which almost monopolized the really important appointments. The effect of such a sequestration may not have been all bad, for there was much talent in the cavalry. But it cannot have been all good, any more than it was to confide the Grand Fleet to gunnery specialists or the archbishopric to Republicans. By 1914 the cavalry corps, like any institution which hears time's winged chariot hurrying near, had become committed to a defensive posture. Its weakness, an aggressive denial of its weakness. A sharing of the spoils which the war brought belped to disguise its further erosion, for, though the tactical facts showed that the war-horse was a dead duck, the consequences for any professional who dared whisper as much—in an expeditionary force where five of the seven senior posts were normally held by cavalrymen—were too punitive to be risked. The climate of silence, thus enforced, heightened resentments in an army already too divided by regimental totemism into "Them and Us"; and the harmful effects of the rancore, thus gener-

ated, persisted into the Second World War.

The central issue is, however, larger than the status and purpose of a relatively small branch in a single combat arm. It turns on the war itself and what we might in fact about it. It is no small, in the author's view, to forget the war, pretend it didn't happen or dismiss it as an aberration. It did happen and is one of the pieces with the war which preceded and followed it, particularly the American Civil War and the Second World War. Those are the ones he calls the "mass wars" or, more strictly in his scheme of things, the "sullen events in the arc of mass warfare." That the war coincided with a dozen other developments, some revolutionary, in human life—economic, political, scientific, intellectual—is, if not irrelevant, like of secondary importance. For it is mass warfare which defines the context of our past 100 years and sets the standards by which any of its events must be measured. It is not for human beings to complain that Verdun makes a mockery of the pursuit of happiness, but the schedule of the right to life, the trenches of the principle of liberty, the war's the thing. And if we see clear, we will observe that the First World War was no less than others of the era and that it was less noisy than the consequences of not fighting it. Bloody battles? But the Europe of 1914 had no right to expect anything else, had it paid attention to what happened at Shiloh or Gettysburg. Terrible casualties? Not really a bad, if we count the totals of the Second World War. Puttle? The revisionists are now trying that, but on the American Civil War, where seven senior posts were normally held by cavalrymen—were too punitive to be risked. The climate of silence, thus enforced, heightened resentments in an army already too divided by regimental totemism into "Them and Us"; and the harmful effects of the rancore, thus gener-

JEAN STROUSE

Alice James  
A Biography  
367pp. Cape. £9.95.  
0 224 01436 6

Alice James's life was a prolonged plea for annihilation. From an early age she realised that her existence was not like a deep forest pool, unruffled by wind or glancing sunlight, an existence in which all creative energy would be stifled. It is a haunting, puzzling, disturbing story, and it could have been told only by a biographer gifted, like Jean Strouse, with a remarkably sensitive intelligence.

The only daughter and youngest of Henry James, Sr's five children was nurtured in the enveloping atmosphere of a family which recorded every twinge of sensation. Her father, whose leg had to be amputated at an early age, discovered as a result that physical disability was the most assured means of securing his own father's devoted attention. He in turn married a pious woman and subsequently devoted his life to imbuing his children with the notion that to be extraordinary was to be both good and beautiful. Achievement would be measured by the quality of response to life. James was something of an aesthetic Bentham in his emphasis on the intensity and nature of sensation. His preoccupation was an epicurean folly amid the domesticized conventions of late nineteenth-century America, and it was only possible in a situation in which money was not a pressing concern. Nevertheless, the James children could not entirely insulate themselves from its utilitarian implications, and the failures—Gertrude, Robertson and Alice—were punished with almost diabolical ruthlessness.

In 1850, when Alice was seven, James père decided that New York could not provide the education essential for the exquisite refinement of his children. He sent them to Europe, where they were to be educated by the best. The central issue is, however, larger than the status and purpose of a relatively small branch in a single combat arm. It turns on the war itself and what we might in fact about it. It is no small, in the author's view, to forget the war, pretend it didn't happen or dismiss it as an aberration. It did happen and is one of the pieces with the war which preceded and followed it, particularly the American Civil War and the Second World War. Those are the ones he calls the "mass wars" or, more strictly in his scheme of things, the "sullen events in the arc of mass warfare." That the war coincided with a dozen other developments, some revolutionary, in human life—economic, political, scientific, intellectual—is, if not irrelevant, like of secondary importance. For it is mass warfare which defines the context of our past 100 years and sets the standards by which any of its events must be measured. It is not for human beings to complain that Verdun makes a mockery of the pursuit of happiness, but the schedule of the right to life, the trenches of the principle of liberty, the war's the thing. And if we see clear, we will observe that the First World War was no less than others of the era and that it was less noisy than the consequences of not fighting it. Bloody battles? But the Europe of 1914 had no right to expect anything else, had it paid attention to what happened at Shiloh or Gettysburg. Terrible casualties? Not really a bad, if we count the totals of the Second World War. Puttle? The revisionists are now trying that, but on the American Civil War, where seven senior posts were normally held by cavalrymen—were too punitive to be risked. The climate of silence, thus enforced, heightened resentments in an army already too divided by regimental totemism into "Them and Us"; and the harmful effects of the rancore, thus gener-

## The role of invalid

By Phyllis Grosskurth

most of the sensibilities of his brood, and so they became hotel children, moving from London to Paris to Geneva, accompanied by successive retainers. As far as Alice was concerned, her education was international, her mother, aunt, or governess, while her brothers were scurried off to schools and museums, Alice's father was attentive only to the instruction of his boys, and in late life Alice wondered whether "If I had any education, I should be more, or less, of a fool than I am." Yet she was never precisely sure that she was a fool. Her father might address her as "heirless of the paternal wit and end of the maternal worth", and her brothers shared witidams with her in a tone of condescending affection: "It was a double bind since it was both flattery and demeaning. Only with Henry Jr did she find close companionship, a kinship of endogenous character, engal in the house, the one told by his father that "Mother loves you more than all her other progeny"—a role which Alice, within her historical context, might not unreasonably have expected to assume.

In 1850 the first part of the sensitive education came to an end when the family returned to an America riven by civil war. The

two younger boys joined the Union forces, patriotic acts which never seemed to measure up to the elusive pursuits of William and Henry. But at least they were participating in something active whereas Alice was not poor enough to work in a factory or old enough to volunteer for nursing or relief work in army hospitals. At thirteen she observed the "civilized" norm of refinement in two ways, by "fits", outbursts of emotion that directly violated it, or by incoherence physical symptoms, which because they made a woman helpless, caricatured the very delicacy and softness she and American men had been taught to revere.

Beard and Mitchell were the progenitors of a number of "esylums" for will-to-do, dissatisfied wives and edgy spinners who were "cured" mainly by rest and escape from responsibility—in other words, a return to infantile dependency. Attacking the problem from a different perspective, Beard and Mitchell anticipated by about thirty years Freud's psychoanalytical insights into the sexual origins of hysteria. Alice spent a large part of her life taking various institutional cures or, more frequently, being cared for by anxious friends and relatives. Alice and her illness became one and the same: through her malaise Alice was able to find the only self with which she could identify.

## The Devil's Advice to Poets

Molt that skin! Lift that face!—you'll go far.  
Grow like Proteus yet more bizarre.  
In perpetual throes,  
Majors mutamorphose—  
Only minors remain who they are.

X. J. Kennedy

## From exhaustion to isolationism

By John Hackett

BRIAN BOND

British Military Policy between the Two World Wars  
419pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford  
University Press. £16.  
0 19 822464 8

This scholarly and readable book by Brian Bond, reader in war studies in King's College London, is very welcome. It treats its subject principally from the point of view of the army but does much to clarify events and issues which are not yet, and probably never can be, perfectly clear.

The year 1918 saw an exhausted Britain, only too glad to turn its back on the tragedy of the war, and the war years, with no further military threat in sight in Europe but with increased imperial commitments elsewhere. Public opinion at home, with strong pacifist undercurrents, inclined to an indifference, even a hostility, towards the armed services which was to persist for twenty years, the army as the least colourful and the least obviously needed of the three, being the least popular. From

August, 1919, until 1932, British defence policy was based on the "Ten-Year Rule"—that the British Empire would not be involved in a major war against a great power for ten years and that the function of the armed services would be home defence and imperial policing, with no requirement for an expeditionary field force. It is hardly surprising that the "return to real soldiering" in the post-1918 army resulted in a professional lethargy inimical to modernization. The Cardwell system, designed to facilitate the raising of overseas imperial garrisons, again dominated an army in which the regimental system and the financial branch dominated the War Office. Regimental life was slow and pleasant, with ample time for those of us who wished to use it to do other things; promodoo moved at a snail's pace and "Bugle's Tune" was almost the rule. A senior appointment, all this would be spent when Haig, with Liddell-Hart at his elbow, almost turned the service inside out in 1937, but that was a long way off.

Service chiefs, though often disdained in their attitudes and obsessed with the defence of India, to which they saw a potent threat from the Soviet Union, were from the late 1920s not unaware of another danger, from a secretly re-arming Germany, but their political masters were not only blind to this but deaf to professional advice as well.

In the political, social and economic climate of the time, modernization of the British Army was bound to suffer. Notwithstanding the activities of a handful of progressive officers such as Fuller and Martell, Britain's lead in mechanized and armoured forces, once pronounced, had by the early 1930s been thrown away. In the first large-scale manoeuvres carried out since 1914, in September, 1925, attempts were made, it is true, to try out new concepts of mechanized warfare, and an "Experimental Mechanized Force" was formed at Tidworth in 1927. The latter, however, remained the Armoured Force, was disbanded in 1929 and the development of offensive armoured warfare, in which the Germans were later to achieve the British as their masters.

took second place to the slow motorization of the conventional arms, cavalry, infantry, and artillery. When Britain went to war in September, 1939, her small field force was almost completely motorized (the only European army, in fact, which this could be said) but her only armoured division could not possibly be got ready before mid-1940, while Germany was already able to deploy six with appropriate air support) in Poland. We had, it is true, formed a Mobile Force in Egypt in 1935 during the Abyssinian crisis, the best of what was to become the most famous of British "Desert" units, but those of us who were in it at the time tended to refer to it as "The Immobile Force".

Delay to modernization was increased by confusion over the army's true role. On the one hand, a Continental commitment was strong, not least in the influential person of Liddell-Hart. Even when it was reluctantly conceded, with Germany heavily and rapidly rearming, that a Field Force would be necessary, the belief was still held, with Liddell-Hart as its chief proponent, that a European war could be fought on a limited liability. On the other hand, a German war with a war with destructive bombing, the Air Force, the Air Defence of Great Britain (ADGB) was given top priority over all other defence requirements, with the Treasury strongly backing Chamberlain's and unrelenting influence over national government which remains truly astounding.

This strategic outlook of the Government at the end of 1937, with Liddell-Hart's powerful support from the desk at The Times was "essentially isolationist and imperialist". It is an ironic fact, as the author points out, in a pro-Liddell-Hart, thinking and his very considerable influence on the management of Britain's defence, that the creation of the armoured force, he so strongly and ably supported, was only justified under the "Continental" commitment he constantly rejected.

The doctrine of limited liability in the war that threatened against Germany, powerfully propounded by Chamberlain as Prime Minister in March 1938, survived until the end of the year, when Hore-Bellah was carried down in favour of a field force, modest enough in all conventional and with little time to put together, to go to the immediate aid of France, in the event of an attack by Germany. If this had happened even a year or two earlier history would almost certainly have been different.

Dr Bond's judgments on personalities are clear, balanced and well documented. His concern is with policies rather than personalities, upon which, highly important though they were, he wisely makes virtually no comment. Tory politicians stand condemned on the record, for the most part, for their myopic view of the world scene, their refusal to accept the reality of a fascist threat, their rejection of a Continental commitment until it was too late to make adequate preparation to meet it, and their timidity in the face of public opinion. Dismal though their record is, however, that of the left is far worse, in spite of attempts to whitewash it in what has been called a "cynical falsification of history" in such books as *Guilty Men*. In Britain, we are asked to believe, only the true and fearless Left was prepared to fight fascism wherever it reared its head, but the country was to do this without troops or weapons. All attempts to rearm while there was still time were ruthlessly opposed by the Labour Party, usually with Liberal support. When Hitler occupied Prague and the rumour of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, Chamberlain's last illusion was shattered, but the trade unions, as Bond points out, were still adamantly opposed to conscription, without which no effective defence effort was possible.

Earlier on there was, an even more striking example of the outlook of the Left. Critical battles, very often won on the margin, and the margin in the Battle of Britain was to be a very narrow one. Indeed, it was difficult enough to secure adequate provision of essential fighter aircraft, particularly

since the air force was reluctant to see any diversion of support from its bomber, the weapon which could win a war, it was claimed, on its own. What is often forgotten is that in the year when fascist unmitigatedly reared its threatening head, in 1933, with Hitler already in power in Germany, the Labour Party Conference voted not just the reduction of the Royal Air Force but for its total abolition.

When the scales fell from Chamberlain's eyes and the rearmament top was fully turned on the War Office, as he clear from Bond's account, performed wonders to control the flow, but it was too late. We were before long to pay the almost criminal neglect to earlier years, for which soldiers and politicians must share the blame, by the sort of setbacks only to be expected for an army embarking on a major war in a state of preparation almost as low as for that in the Crimea. Some things did not come right for several years—and that not always quite right. Typical—and serious—was the suspicion of the army's supposed intentions to have it used only as an auxiliary service. The ghost of Donohue was always in the wings and Army-RAF cooperation was a dangerously slow growth.



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**By D. M. Thomas**

**The Sulcide  
Aldwych Theatre**

When someone shoots himself in serious nineteenth-century drama, in Chekhov or Ibsen say, there is an element of farce. We agree with Judge Brack: people don't do that sort of thing. In contrast, the consumer suicide of Senyón, an unemployed, middle-class worker, in Nikolai Erdman's farce *The Acid* (now transferred from the RSC's Warehouse Theatre to the Aldwych) is profoundly serious. Beneath our indecisions at his Haeslet-like antics of self-mutilation and slaying, sympathy and pain grip the heart. The play ends 1920. The paradise hymned by Chekhov's ineffectual characters has come to pass and feels more like hell. People do that sort of thing now. Indeed, it seems a wholly foolish act.

Erdman's fellow-dramatist at the Meyerhold Theatre, Mayakovsky, blew out his brains around the time when *The Suicide* was completed. The logic of suicide would become increasingly unanswerable as Stalin's grip tightened; though it also became increasingly superfluous: the State would do the job for you—for Meyerhold, among millions. Nadezhda Mandelstam, who described *The Suicide* as the best play in the Soviet repertoire, observed that the hero's ultimate decision to live gained added resonance over the years; she came to see him as the spokesman for those, like herself and her husband, who dared to take the logical way out. Absurdly, they chose to cling to existence for as long as they could.

Absurdity was the only sanity. Erdman uses farce as a way of coping with, and exposing, the madness of a society in which "only the deed says the living think." Whom Egor ("I'm postmen, and what I want to read about is postmen") signs a letter "25,000 postmen," and explains it is pseudonym, it's funny; but the so-called "mass protests" of outraged workers have been anything but funny for innumerable persecuted dissidents. It is more astute, telling that the play was ever in rehearsal than that it was banned.

## By Richard Combs

Gloria  
Columbie Cinema, Sheffesbury  
Avenue

Saidson has New York been filmed with the kind of wit and energy—the sense of surprise—that John Cassavetes displays in this location-made gangster melodrama—while also on underworld outcast and hard-bitten gunperson, trying to vengeance a sixteen-year-old boy from the surprise is the Mob. Part of the making this kind of film at all. Performers rather than plots always been the first priority of his movies, and he has shunned genre film-making for something that is a bit of occasionally woolly, combination of improvisation, home movies, and actorish quest for “authenticity”.

Gloria, however, twists and turns through all expectations with more skill than most movie stars could. It begins with a tense sequence, which makes particularly foreboding use of the New York scene—only to travel by night across the Manhattan skyline to the South Bronx. There, Gloria and Alvin family waits elaborously for a visit from the Mob—the father, a Mafia accountant who has been spending off the top and talking to the F.B.I. just before the family's annihilation—only to find a near-nighthour, a visit from a young man, Gloria (a wonderfully accurate impersonation by Gene Rowlands) comes calling, and is immediately

before the opening and never performed or published in the Soviet Union. The RSC deserves great credit for having resurrected this hilarious, sad, life-affirming drama in Peter Tegel's lively translation.

Like all really good drama, *The Suicide* has the power to move and disturb us timelessly, as well as in its historical setting. But the first response is reliant upon the second; and unfortunately, during the first few scenes of the Russian director's production, the Soviet context is not firmly established. Roger Rees as Semyon, Susan Straker as Lila, and Lila Kaye as his mother-in-law, leave the air of middle-class English actors playing an unemployed English worker and his family of the 1880s. Their Russian names seem very odd. Not until the act of various members of the petty bourgeoisie, all of whom are prepared to commit suicide as a protest against their class, does the play begin to seem Russian and the windowless well to take on overtones of the old manor house. Rees' wife manages to bring Semyon's quiet mood to the fore; but Roger Rees' performance grows from competence to excellence.

The dissected intellectuals and profiteers are played energetically; with a little help, they even manage to sound too professorially Slavonic in the funeral strains for the supposed deceased. But Mother Russia, in the persons of the black-clothed and superstitious mother-in-law, and briefly a pair of extraordinarily nimble and youthful *babushkas* in a cemetery, elude this performance. Erdmen might have enjoyed that irony: Mother Russia eluded the revolution too.

The author himself, like Semyon, seems to have kept his head down and for another forty years, after the death of his second and last play. He survived a spell in Siberia and lived obscurely. But *lived*, like Semyon: and managed it by turning into the Deaf Mute who at one point "listens" to Semyon's philosophical questionlog. In 1949 Pasternak read *Doctor Zhivago* to a circle of friends, including Erdman. Erdman listened, and went away without saying a word. Life is not so simple as to cross a field.

Peter Tegel's translation of *The Suicide* is published by Pluto Books (52pp, £2.50, 0 85104 203 4).

given possession of the youngest child and the disputed account book.

There is an authentic-feeling edginess and black humour to all this that makes one think Casavese may have missed his *metier* as an acting director. But the audience has been won over completely as the characters in the plot that has been unrolled in the last fifteen minutes is virtually all *à la* *Horrid* mountains. Once the heroine and her charge take flight into the streets, with the booze in disorganized but persistent pursuit, attention shifts to what happens between them. This is aurores out a hilarious mélange of double-swapping, which the cynical will see no sooner than the fact that he must mother the bewitched child than he begins acting out his own gangster fantasy.

What Casavetevs has done is to open up the genre while questioning whether he is obeying its rules. Why does he open it up to is a good deal of Casavetev's life and amusement; he's enjoying a much harder time of it, but he's enjoying her pursuit—any graveyard—to the point where I can say a proper farewell to the genre. Gloriat also has a way of dealing with the bad things that are happening to him (pre-empting it's just a dream, or he's in a hospital, or a final confrontation, which—even the songsters are pretending not to be a songster)—a conclusion, a puzzle, a film that has an appropriate ending. Hollywood needs the kind of Casavetevs—you are not asking you are, or what you are.

**By Humphrey Carpenter**

**The Ticket-of-Leave Man**  
**Cottesloe Theatre**

Tom Taylor (1817-1880) had an enviable career: Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge; Professor of English at University College, London; practicing barrister; editor of *Punch* from 1874; and an immensely successful playwright. In thirty-five years, more than seventy of his pieces were performed on the London stage. On the other hand, many of them were pot-boilers, and only a couple of decades after his death the *DNB* judged that "he lacked dramatic genius or commanding power of expression".

True, apparently, on the evidence of what was generally regarded as his best play, now revived in an energetic production by Piers Huggard at the National Theatre. There is, at the moment, a lot to distract the eye from the business. One of the men in the orchestra is rigged out to look like an East End muscle man, and a trio of strings and piano not only plays entractes, but underlines the emotional line of dialogue with tremolandi. The production is worthy of the best chamber orchestras in elated days. Robin Don's set looks like a quieter version of the one in *Tenny's Oliver!* Staging, and the Director's reminder is apt, if uncomfortable. Taylor adapted *A Tale of Two Cities* for the stage, with the author's approval, and one can hardly doubt that the play he was trying to strike the authentic note in was note. Low life is there in all varieties—criminals, nevvies, im-

**By Virginia Llewellyn Smith**

**Nine to Five**  
**Odeon, Leicester Square**

Ever dreamt of stringing up your boss? Nine to Five is a fantasy for all those office workers who see themselves as the Manson-squads calling in on the bossman under the table. Foodie plays Judy, a divorced statting work for a huge corporation among a group of cruelly ragimented women. Lily Tomlin (memorebia in Nashville as the caring mother patiently teaching her dumb and dumb children) is Violet, a widowed turned competent career girl; she has trained one young man after another only to see them promoted above her while she remains section supervisor. Dolly Parton makes her screen debut as Doralee, the Texen-belle with a heart of gold who, to the amusement of her female colleagues, turns out not to be bedding the boss. Her frenkin' Hart Jr. (Dabney Coleman) is the object of their common scorn. Doralee sends him off with true Southern courtesies as he clutches at her and flashes at her computer-like, eld-pproses and unanswerable messages ("You mean I'm a moria to me than just a dumb-ass?"). Meanwhile, Violet's bright ideas upwards "Violet's bright ideas" while making her fix his coffee and do his shopping. "Teamwork" she calls it.

The petty needling of the boss-  
tossy, the consolation of  
the pisp in the locker-room, the quick  
punch-time ease of the store for  
the staff and the response to the  
nothing we have not met before in  
the oppressed life of the female  
office-worker as, now, revealed  
in the workman Judy. But Jane Fonda  
in her performance knows that mun-  
dana things like needling one's  
puckles goes on the way of  
organizing the world. At the start,  
Judy, Violet, and Doralee have no  
control over their predicament, but  
a constructive plan to improve it,  
and dreams of revenge are only  
the result, created by a binge of  
sex and sex and producing, by  
the end of the film, a new

pecunious clerks led into bad habits, tiffs at beer-gardens, parvenues of all kinds—and he has something of Dickens's ear for language. But Taylor is not made of Dickens's stuff.

At his best, he reaches the heights of Mr Pontor, or a *Punch* cartoon. He is a delicious glimpse of high-life in a South-Western suburb, with seven-and-sixpenny bottles of sherry flylog about on salvers at the open-air tables, while nigger minstrels perform offstage. But at the centre of all this there is a woman, title of an innocent Lancashire taken for a ride by hardened criminals, serving time for passing forged notes, and then trying to come to terms with the fact that though he has his ticket-

leave—his discharge from prison, full remission for good behavior—was a thing of which Taylor cannot do anything. He is a pugilist, and Paul Copley as the lad himself and Rebecca Saire as his fiancée seems understandably unsure that he will resort to spoof or play the straight. In the second half, in the second half, has no doubt that he takes to cheering, hissing and booing in all the right places, after which everything is simply good fun. When the "old" Elphick's Detective Hewkshaw is allowed to emerge from behind a navy's pint pot, or a tombstone awfully with dry ice, to clap the handcuffs on the villain, he remains before anything else a good policeman.

Who credit is due to the violator, who has to work much the deed if anyone present. But surely Tom Taylor's contemporaries saw more in the play than this? Have our many Old Time been dulled by too

only patch of tedium in the film). Impotent depression is what unites them, and it is a pure accident that throws them into a situation where they are obliged to fight, in self-defence.

What began as a comedy of manners develops into a fast-moving spoof thriller. Outside the office routine, we observe competence temporarily deserts Judy, Violet and Doroleo, who panic, get hysterical, smooch up the car and in general exhibit a variety of traditionally female shortcomings. What seems out to get them, and it is nothing as efficient as teamwork that gets them to diomo base; rather, it is the solidarity of being all such nice girls together.

The virtues of middle-of-the-road American womanhood fairly shine out of Fonda, Tomlin and Foster: when the enemy at last falls into their hands, Doveice is easily persuaded by the other two out of her "saxtivist" evolution ("Ah says, we here a couple wranglers, so up'rears and heet the shit outa him"). Heirs is enough art to follow; from the traffic cop who makes them pull over, Judy's ex-husband attempts to connect, in every eyeball-to-eyeball encounter, the man end up looking foolish, and he is the final end-up of virility Franklin Hart, himself is left dangling in fancy dress from his own bedroom ceiling, like a castrated Superman.

It is a fairy tale, and my one regret is that from it, and with John Hignins (who scripted *Harold Lloyd*) directing, we could possibly have expected ghoulish comments and nightmarish events to happen. Nowhere is the atmosphere more fabulous than in the happy ending, when the ogre's fiery domain has been transformed into a beautiful, green, fertile landscape with a river and a mill race; and an every dead wants a pot plant and the office lush, a brand new car, thanks to the Alcoholics Anonymous Program. Nice to have tall tales, but they are not new before, but it proves that even her face sticking out of an era of wash-n-wear fluffs have not been conjure up illusions of freedom, and the right to treat the subject seriously, is almost lost and very funny. Go and see it in your lunch hour—you then not have time to buy the

*THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT*

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Much credit is due to the viololist, who has to work much the hardest of anyone present. But surely Tom Taylor's contemporaries saw more in the play than this? Have our sensibilities been dulled by too many Old Tyme Music Halls?

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## The pithead and the props department

By Blake Morrison

Sons and Lovers  
BBC TV

The classic serial is traditionally delectable. Its favourite source material may be the nineteenth-century realist novel, but it likes to soften the hard edges of social differences in which such fiction deals. Nostalgia takes their place: there is a strong emphasis on period flavour, which usually turns out to have less to do with history than with weather (blue skies over cornfields and London smogs). And diminution invariably ensues, the camera—with its winks and nods and underlinings—eradicating the ambiguities of the original text.

Trevor Griffiths is on record as having some animus against these conventions, and part of the interest in watching the adaptation of *Sons and Lovers* for television (in a series of seven episodes now drawing to a close) has been to see how far he has resisted them. In the event he has gone a good deal less far than his professed ambition to make Lawrence relevant "in a year when unemployment will reach three million" might have led us to suppose. And the subtitle of the series—"A Version for Television"—has not been the licence for weaker knowledge, but is simply a modest disclaimer, a way of acknowledging that however closely Griffiths may stay to the text (and for the most part it has been very close indeed), omissions of various kinds are inevitable. The tension between Griffiths's social purposes and the restraints of classic serial convention has resulted in one of the best adaptations of recent years.

Part of the reason for the success lies, of course, in the nature of

*Sons and Lovers* itself. Many of Lawrence's fictions, with their penchant for the "unknown" and "beyond", those dark forces and that toiling and frothing of the psyche, do not "adapt" at all well. There was a reminder of this, halfway through the series, with the South Bank Show premiere of *The Trespasser*, all moonlight and flowing white dresses and terrible dialogue: too often Lawrence tempts film directors to re-live their youthful fantasies with Alan Bates in the leading role. But *Sons and Lovers* is different: as Lawrence himself acknowledged to Edward Garnett, it is a novel interested in "accumulating objects in the powerful light of emotions" ("that hard violent style full of sensation and presentation", as he called it in the same letter), and this physicality attends a chance of visual translation.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, Griffiths fares best with the work scenes: Morel down the pit, Paul at Jordan's Surgical Appliance factory, Clara and her mother making lace in their parlour, the Leivers brothers at the farm. There is an authentic materiality, too, about the pub, the chapel, the backstreets of the Bottoms, and so on. When Paul and Clara walk to the spot where they make love for the first time, it is all there, eerily identical to the Lawrence passage: Wilford bridge, the steep bank of red earth sloping down to the Trent, the slipping-and-sliding, the two fishermen, and the crushed red carnations.

In other areas, however, the over-enthusiasm of the BBC props department takes its toll. The seeing off of William to London is an excuse to uncouple an immaculately gleaming old steam train. The portentous naming-of-Paul episode takes place with the whites and willow of a cricket match in the vicinity. Paul's early attempt to knock the haughtiness out of Clara is overshadowed by some Akenfield-

like isaplog-over-haystacks to the accompaniment of folksy Morris tunes.

Hardest hit of all is the interior of the Morel home, which has undergone a full-scale embourgeoisement: a riot of clocks, pictures, bookcases, brass candlesticks, top notch crockery and lush floral wallpaper, it is not a home that the black-faced Walter Morel looks comfortable in, especially when he is taking a tin bath. Not surprisingly there is no place in this version for that marvellous early scene from the novel in which Morel takes his breakfast early, teasing his bacon with a clasp-knife and using a newspaper as a table mat: it would not have looked right in this house.

As for the characters looking right, that, too, has its hits and misses. Tom Bell has been widely praised for his performance as Walter, and though there are a shade too many Septimusianisms in his grimacing and drunkenness, he is about as near as he could be to Morel's warm "sensuous flame of life" without actually burning bright. Eileen Atkins as Gertrude Morel is perfect, too—the right blend of meek-mouthed crabbliness, keep-your-hands-off possessiveness, and that-my-boy pride in Paul's artistic achievements. In the wars of the Morels, Griffiths rightly resists the temptation to channel our sympathy towards one or the other, for though Lawrence in later life came to feel that he had been unfair to his father, the novel is more balanced

than he knew, and Griffiths gets this right.

Once he begins sporting a moustache midway through the series, Karl Johnson bears an uncanny resemblance to photos of the young Lawrence. But he is rather too old for Paul, a point particularly noticeable whenever he takes off on one of his lolling runs (unfortunates echoes here of the adults-in-short-trousers frolicking in Dennis Potter's *Blue Remembered Hills*—and why should Paul be forced to aprint everywhere?). It is an impressive performance nonetheless, gawky but ordinary, and destined to stick in the memory if only for Johnson's exasperated pronunciation of the word "mother"—"meth-her" it sounds like, and is clearly the result of long practice (the accents generally seem to have been worked on very hard).

With so many of the other characters plausibly brought to life—not least the thick-tipped Clara and threatening Baxter Dawes—it is only with Leslie Melfinger's Miriam that things begin to go wrong. That angled rictus hat she wears, perhaps intended to denote her romantic attachment to Mary Queen of Scots but looking as if it had come off the terraces of a box of Scotts, is wrong from the start. And Melfinger is simply too coquettish and conventionally pretty to do justice to the girl of "large features" and "almost hysterical gestures" that Lawrence created. Despite lingering scenes, there is little of the religious brooding intensity that "wheeling the soul out of things" that's central to Miriam's character.

The fallure is surprising given Griffiths's studious drawing-out of feminist elements in the novel: not just Clara's lecturing at a "Women's Social and Political Meeting" ("Women of the World Unite" banners in the background), but Mrs Morel's interest in the Co-Operative Women's Guild and Miriam's complaining that "men have everything". It is a good example of Griffiths's determination to emphasise political rather than psychological elements of the novel. The Oedipal theme has not been ignored (the shot of Mrs Morel running her fingers through Paul's hair is frank enough, and ten years ago might have been enough to cause a minor rumpus), but it's made rather less of here than in the bulk of Lawrentian criticism.

Lawrence's *Complete Poems*, collected and edited with an introduction and notes by Vivian de Sola Pinto and F. Warren Roberts, first published in 1964, is being brought out in a 1,000 page single-volume paperback by Penguin on February 26, at £5 (0 14 042 220 X). Among other Penguin publications this month is a new edition (by David Hey) of Richard Gough's *The History of Myddle*, an intriguing and unusual work of seventeenth-century rural local history (334pp, £2.50, 0 14 005641 9).



"Othello", a 1973 woodcut by the American artist and illustrator Leonard Baskin, from the current exhibition of his work at the Cottage Gallery, 9 Hereford Road, Bayswater, London W2.

## Verfremdungseffekt

By Norman Stone

The Journal of Bridget Hitler  
BBC TV

The onlie begittar of Phillip Saville's production seems to have been Haas Jurgen Syberberg's film *Hitler*, the first part of which is a collage of Hitler speeches, various side-effects and a great deal of ranting, accompanied from time to time by the opening bars of the *Porzuff* Prelude. The *Journal of Bridget Hitler*, being British, is less readily incomprehensible than the German effort. Written by Beryl Bainbridge (and related to her novel, *Young Audley*), it hangs together round a supposed visit of Hitler to his elder half-brother, in 1912, in Liverpool. The half-brother's existence (like that of his British wife and a son who later plagued Hitler in Germany and subsequently has lived in America) is true.

There is a great deal of symbolism. Some of it is obvious enough—Hitler in the Art Gallery, musing on his failure to become an artist, and then quoting bits from Mein Kampf, while film of his triumphant days is shown—accompanied, for some reason, by bite of Mahler. The point, presumably, is that failed men are often very bitter. (In all this, the parts that are interesting consist of old film footage and excerpts from *Tristan and Siegfried*.)

But I am not at all sure what the rest of the symbolism amounts to. There are films shot in black-and-white, with characters wearing Edwardian clothing, including family scenes in the foreground of which suddenly appear figures (in colour) wearing either SA uniform or modern clothing. A little later, and even more mysteriously, the entire dramatic personae (the actors and Beryl Bainbridge) appear in a scene, making polite conversation and then getting involved in a very, very wholly mysterious origin, with

some skinheads, who throw tin cans. Perhaps this is some taboos point about football hooligans. After that it all drags on and on, and there are scenes of Hitler and Women—not least, his half-niece, Gell Raubel, who killed herself in September, 1931. I think, but am not really at all sure, that the whole thing has something to do with the relationship between power and sex; more remotely, it might have something to do with the link between will to power and alienation from one's roots. But it could just be that I am imposing some kind of sterile male ordering-principle on what is meant to be a vastly fecund, earth-motherish, stream-of-consciousness sort of chaos, a tableau which could only be completed by my marching onto the set wearing a Pickelhaube and carrying a battered portable typewriter.

## Goes out, followed by a furry animal

By Stanley Wells

The Winter's Tale  
BBC TV

A permanent set of cogged, wedge-shaped blocks, like great jumps of cheese, defines the playing area. For the first half, the blocks are granite-grey, the floor is patterned in black and white. It's a chilly winter in Sicily, for Bohemia, the wedges turn double-gloucester yellow, the floor green; stools of corn and potted plants replace skeletal trees. Nature is art; symbolism is enhanced but the set's limitations in Jane Howell's production—the latest in the BBC Shakespeare series—deny the romantic liberties of the tale.

The small screen all too easily circumscribes, concentrating attention, reducing perspective, diminishing stature. Frequent head-shoulder shots—addressing us

directly through the perspex, fine for Rikki Fulton's Irishly plausible Autolycus, at other points make too explicit a distinction between private and public utterance. Rhetoric is inhibited. Anna Calder-Marshall is a sympathetic Hermione, but too cooed-at in her trial. Why should only we learn that the Emperor of Russia is her father? She should be pleading to the whole court, not just to Leontes and to us. Jeremy Kemp's Leontes, if overacted, properly humourless, seems underplayed. His anguished utterances need air. He avoids embarrassment but sacrifices range. He contrasts with Robert Stephens's Polixenes, never dull, but mannered, visually over-vocally, with no respect for the pentameter line.

Individual performances are well characterised—a powerful, deeply felt Paulina from Margaret Tyack, Cyril Luckham endearing as her ill-fated husband, Arthur Hewlett an earnest and sincere Old Shepherd, Debbie Farrington as Perdita is pretty, innocent but amused, a

country less to be reckoned with. George Hows brings style to Pauline's steward, and television can give us a real baby as the infant Perdite.

Jane Howell's direction is sensible and fluent. Some pitfalls are avoided. If Robin Kermode's pleasant Florizel does not time stand still with his praises of Perdita to the pastoral scene, at least the jollity seems reasonably unforced. The set-piece dances are cut, with some justification. But the play seems smaller, flatter than in the theatre. There is less sense of interaction among the characters, and so less comedy, less drama. The bear looms and Antigonus cowers, but our withers are unwrung. Though the status scene is moving, the focus on individuals denies us the sense of simultaneous involvement, the thrill of ritual participation as the stone is made flesh. The approach is intelligent and honest, the acting accomplished, but the medium has reduced the message.

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## commentary

## The moral desperado of Craigenputtock

By Peter Keating

In 1933, the Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature at Edinburgh University, H. J. C. Grierson, felt obliged to change for publication the title of some lectures he had given three years earlier, from *Carlyle and the Hero to Carlyle and Hitler*, because, as he explained, "so entirely do the recent happenings in Germany illustrate the conditions which lead up to, or at least make possible, the emergence of the Hero as Carlyle chiefly thought of him". The terms used by Grierson to register his shock at realising the possible implications of Carlyle's teaching may have been new, but his sudden shift from admiration to revulsion is common in the history of Carlyle's reputation. Many of Carlyle's own contemporaries felt much the same as Grierson. Matthew Arnold had been deeply influenced by Carlyle, but that did not stop him from coming to see the older writer as a "moral desperado".

Interest in Carlyle has survived these periodic attacks, and nowhere more so than in Edinburgh. Local connections have a lot to do with this. Carlyle was a student at, and a Rector of, Edinburgh University; some of the finest of his early essays were first published in the *Edinburgh Review*; Jane Baillie Welsh lived at Haddington, and after her marriage to Carlyle they rented a house in Edinburgh before moving out to Inverclyde. Carlyle even visited the city to see the spot where Carlyle experienced the spiritual conversion that was to lead him to the Rus and Tolstoy of *Sartor Resartus*.

As in most university cities with important literary associations, the present-day Edinburgh's concern with Carlyle is a mixture of professional scholarship and local enthusiasm, though in this particular



Samuel Laurence's early—and previously unpublished—portraits of Jane and Thomas Carlyle (1833), on loan to the Toft Rice Art Centre, University of Edinburgh, from a private collection.

case—even more strikingly, perhaps, than with Scott or Stevenson—the relationship between town and gown is unusually close. While academic focus is centred on the massive transatlantic scholarship of the Duke-Edinburgh Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Carlyle—nine volumes of which have now been published—and on the recently established *Carlyle Newsletter*, the town can also claim an active Carlyle Society which meets regularly, sponsors lectures and prize essays, and publishes its own series of Occasional Papers. On the weekend of February 6-8 these interests and enthusiasms combined to commemorate—almost to the exact day—the centenary of Carlyle's death.

Although a formal conference provided the focal point of the

weekend, various activities and contributions gathered around it which carried an air of having resisted coordination, as though they were spontaneous demonstrations of Edinburgh's fascination with Carlyle. Photographs and documents were displayed at both the central public library and the University Library; there was a church service in St Giles, a dramatization, *Carlyle and Jane*, given by Tom Fleming and Edith MacArthur in Craigmiles, a coach tour of places associated with the Carlyles, and several books and pamphlets produced especially for the occasion. There was also an unexpected opportunity to see two splendid Samuel Laurence portraits of Jane and Thomas Carlyle which the owners allowed to be exhibited publicly for the first time.

The opening address of the conference, delivered to a packed lecture hall by Lord Dacre of Glanton—formerly Hugh Trevor-Roper—conveyed an impression of Carlyle that would have fully confirmed Grierson's fears. Here immediately we were presented with Carlyle as an "accidental rebel" driven by his Calvinist upbringing to view history as a "theatre of divine judgments periodically executed by great men", and driven further by his failure to find a suitable hero in the French Revolution, to move on to Prussia (Frederick), Lord Dacre insisted that Carlyle must be allowed a place to the "intellectual pedigree of Nazism", and as supporting evidence drew a graphic picture of Goebbels reading passages from Frederick the Great to Hitler as Berlin fell around them.

The other speakers at the conference offered interpretations of Carlyle which were more attractive, less disconcerting, and "safer" than Lord Dacre's. Owen Dudley Edwards portrayed Carlyle as an aggressive Scottish educator, setting out to conquer London by high drama and shock tactics, a man haunted by the image of Burns rather than Calvin, who was to find in his heru-figures, a reflection of his own heroic aspirations. J. Hills Miller, concentrating on *Sartor*, gave a close reading of this, the mildest of all Carlyle's books, to support his contention that it was a hieroglyphical work about hieroglyphics. David Dalchies, giving the Thomas Green lectures as part of the conference, moved sensitively between the numerous paradoxes he described as characterizing Carlyle—the bewildering alternations between compassion and cruelty, authoritarianism and individualism, a transcendent and a factual view of life.

The conference closed with an open discussion between speakers, convenors and audience. Lord Dacre was not present to defend his controversial view, and an attempt to bring the discussion back to Carlyle's intellectual links with fascism was skilfully deflected by the panel of speakers. The audience was then invited to make one last comment. It took the form of a plea for a modern annotated edition of *The French Revolution*. The astonished academic panellists hastily conferred and announced that just such an edition was on the way.

*Thomas and Jane*, an anthology of letters selected by Ian Campbell, is published by the Friends of Edinburgh University Library (102pp, £5.50 0 905 152 018); K. J. Fielding and Heather Henderson, *Carlyle and the Rectorial Election for 1855 and the Rectorial Election for 1856* (Carlyle Pamphlet No. 1 30pp and 2 16pp, 80p each) are available from the Department of English, University of Edinburgh.

## Et in Aracataca ego

By John Sturrock

Growing up in Macondo BBC TV

Bump along the dusty roads of provincial Colombia and you pass empty billboards advertising not Coke, or Ford trucks, or other foreign accessories, but the collected works of the nation's literary glory, the novelist Gabriel García Márquez. Esteemed for the writer has risen to the height, locally, of invoking him to stand for the presidency, a "messianic" role he in no way covets, although political involvement was what he went to write about. But if García Márquez is a name of such note in his homeland, he is many other Latin American writers engaging and enlightening interest. This view with him was filmed in Mexico City, and very comfortably dug in there the grizzled Colombian looked, in his own mind he is not a Colombian writer any more, but a Latin American one.

The talk, however, was of origins rather than acculturation, so it was to Colombia we went. Growing up in Macondo was the title to which García Márquez spoke, and to fine effect. Macondo of course is a place where the sumptuously, lyrically fantastic country of his great novel, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, an epic country of the imagination. The country which we could say, behind the birth of his fiction, was very emphatically not Macondo, but the scruffy, poultry-ridden village of Aracataca, where he spent formative years until he was banished to the sea by choice. But to accept that there, even though it is forty years or more ago, García Márquez lived there, so a desperately vacuous place it had to seem, as the camera

panned listlessly about beneath the drooping and flaking walls: the apparent utter tedium of the place being the proof we needed that this was what the little Gabriel had known, too.

Perhaps he did know it, but he knew other things besides: he knew the people who lived in Aracataca as well as those who died there, bloodily at times, and wore taken to the brilliant-white cemetery of which he was always hold the key. García Márquez well knows, we are not the eye: it is a mythical place founded on the prodigious tales, speculations and fancies of a simple, shut-off community. García Márquez suggested that it was the grandeur of the place which he lived with in Aracataca who formed him as a writer. His grandmother was a source of folklore, credulity and superstition; his grandfather, something of a realist yet a romantic, too, having fought in the civil wars of Colombia and campaigned for the liberals in the 1920s. From the pair of them he acquired his first sense of the world, his sense of the past, his sense of the future. And his grandfather did better by him, still, insisting that every day the boy went to the film to read him the story of the film afterwards. The irresistible narrative of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is a tribute to Aracataca's invisible oral culture.

A swartly soulful young boy sitting all alone on a chair in a plain, dominantly bare room was, one had to assume, the novelist-to-be, the escaped who would put Aracataca on the map. But García Márquez's thousand miles away and in another language from the impeccable sector's English we could hear, was not odds with such sentimental film-making. It was a less stylized thing, then this, a more modest, less busy learning the notes of village life. He could not, as a child, get into the company of grown men, but he moved remarkably easily through the society of women. Nothing of what that society can have been like found its way so to the television screen.

The programme went better at those times when the scene changed to the various towns to which García Márquez later removed and where he practised as a journalist. Even then, as passages from the novels were read out, the gap grew immense between the noisy, baroque prose of what was asked to take as their fictional transportation. The interest was entirely in what the novelist himself had to say, until one longed for him to be dislodged from his desk in Macondo and made to revisit his birthplace in person, to direct the camera around and above all to listen, to retain; if it can still be done, forty years on, the sources of his extraordinary literary achievement.

The Royal Shakespeare Company has just announced its plans for the new season at Stratford and in London, beginning in April. Twelve productions will be staged, of which five are new. Among the new productions, *The Merchant of Venice*, directed by Stratford, will be John Barton's *The Merchant of Venice*, from April 15, with David Suchet as Shylock, Edward Gough as Antonio, and Jonathan Hyde as Bassanio, and the British premiere of *Alas, Alas*, directed by Adrian Noble, with Alcega

## Modern Literary Theory

Sir—Roger Scruton writes (February 6): "It seems to me that no reason has ever been given for taking semiotics seriously as an academic discipline (no reason, that is, which is not already addressed to someone who believes that semiotics is an academic discipline)."

While briefly exhilarating to those of us impatient of the pretentiousness and misuse of language that often seem inseparable from the "structuralist" approach to literature, Dr Scruton's remarks, on second thoughts, merely serve to provoke the counterquestion: "What reason can he give today for taking the 'humanist' or 'moralist' approach to literature seriously as an academic discipline (what reason, that is, which is not already addressed to someone who believes that semiotics is an academic discipline)?" It is striking that not one of your distinguished contributors (not even, quite, the eloquent and deeply humane L. C. Knights) is able to offer one.

The problem concerns all of us engaged to the teaching of literature, not just English literature—and the willingness to see literature in an international perspective is, ironically, common to both structuralists and those responsible for the English Tripos at Cambridge. In an age in which the powerful intellectual movements of Marxism and modern sociology and anthropology have cast convincing doubts on the absoluteness of cultural values, and in an age so sensitive to contact with cultures in which literature and literary studies have not enjoyed the privileged position they traditionally have in our own, the elite status once claimed for them, particularly at Cambridge, must now be actively defended if it is to be maintained.

Pending a convincing restatement of the humanist position, however, there seems no alternative but to study of literature as a cultural phenomenon. (Literature itself may claim comparison with philosophical and theological inquiry, but the study of literature?) There can be little purpose, however, in studying literature without the acquired critical sensitivity and empirical common sense which are an integral part of "traditional" literary studies in this country, something which has been impressively demonstrated by Jonathan Culler, with his theory of "literary complicity", and by David Lodge, in whose handling of structuralist theory the rational and self-confessed subjectivity of traditional English criticism never risks vanishing into the intellectual solipsism that often passes for objectivity among structuralists.

Much is said of the elitism of both "sides" in the debate. But perhaps a truly academic study of literature will be one which can be taken seriously by others besides the initiated.

RODERICK BEATON, Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, King's College, Strand, London WC2R 2LS.

Sir—Impressed as I was by your formidable symposium on the crisis facing the teaching of English at Cambridge and, presumably, at other universities as well, I found myself regretting that not only was no student asked to contribute an opinion, but also that the interests of particular books and whole were ignored in the discussion of general principles.

The honourable exception was Malcolm Bradbury, who clearly has his students at heart when he suggests that "many... come into English to engage with the humane pleasure of particular books, and are not always delighted to be instructed in the modes of deconstructing texts, of engaging a universalist narrative grammar, and of subsuming literary theory." For myself, as a recent graduate of Cambridge, I can only say that Bradbury's suggestion here is entirely accurate. John Bayley, among others, mentioned the "solitary business" the student has to carry out in front of the cap of *Eng Lit*, of seeing that a deal of gloom has attached itself, by way of well-intentioned sympathy, around the

figure of the "lonely student". In my experience, however, it holds as true of literary study as of any other discipline that we receive but little help from the teachers in this context, necessarily entails the student being left alone to experience on author, perhaps one should say a text, at first hand. Quite apart from the joy of solitary discovery, it is surely of crucial importance that first-hand experience of literature should be gained as far as possible from any critical control. By all means let the student then deconstruct the text, if he so wishes, and of course there should be teachers who can guide his procedure—but only after his initial, solitary reading.

STERREN ROMER, 53 Batsman Street, Cambridge.

## 'The Greek Language'

Sir—In my previous letter (January 9) I quoted chapter and verse to show that John Chadwick, concentrating on the initial chapters of his book which sketches the development of Greek from the Bronze Age until the present day, had been guilty of three major misrepresentations. His reply (January 23) which I have just seen makes strange and disturbing reading. "My precise documentation," he writes, "is that he persists in the untruth of attributing to me (proud should I be!) E. Laroche's important researches into the pre-Greek place-names (see my book pp 10 ff) while omitting to mention his failure to tackle Laroche's the Balamene Colloquium in 1970. As for his own work on the Greek dialects, I quoted the adverse verdict of an authoritative survey, one which since I wrote has been strengthened by the leading Dutch scholar in the field. The results tally closely with those of H. G. Lohmann who drew on Greek folk-memory about the migrations period. Chadwick would have better understood the essential nature of the 'Dorian' problem had he read more carefully pp 77 ff, where I quote a number of authorities who insist that it is a complex sociological phenomenon and not simply a pattern of dialect peculiarities.

There is another gap in his reading. My teacher Paul Kretschmer held that the Greeks invaded in three waves, but soon after the decipherment I wrote, 'The linguistic evidence does not justify the old hypothesis' (*A Companion to Homer*, page 83) and this is further developed in the book (page 79). Chadwick seems not to have noticed this and refers to his twenty-year crusade against Kretschmerism.

Finally, the demnatio memoriae. But for his obsession with dialect matters Chadwick might have found space to discuss the *Black Sea* of Sirs; Thoughts on Music and Literature" at the University of Kent. His symphonies have been performed in the United States; his *Mr W. S.—A Ballet* was broadcast on BBC Radio 3 in 1978 and his opera *The Blooms of Dublin* will be broadcast next year.

MILES BURNBYR is a Fellow of Robinson College, Cambridge. HUMPHREY CARPENTER's books include *J. R. R. Tolkien*, 1977, and *Jesus* (to the Oxford University Press Text Master series), 1980. JAMES CAMPBELL is the editor of the *New Edinburgh Review*. RICHARD COMBS is the editor of *Sight and Sound*. MARTIN COOPER's books include *Beethoven: The Last Decade*, 1970. GEORGE CRAIG is Reader in French Literature at the University of Sussex.

JOSEPH BERTIN is the editor of *The American Scholar*. GAVIN EWART's *The Collected Essays* 1933-1980 was published last year. PETER GREEN's books include *Amida from Achaia*, 1971, and *The Shadow of the Parthenon*, 1972. PAVILIN GROSSKOPF's biography of Haydock Ellis was published last year.

GAHAM HUGH is the author of *The Dream and the Task*, 1967, and *Style and Stylistics*, 1969. GEOFFREY HUNTER is Professor of Philosophy at University College of London.

BLAKE AND HIS Commentators Sir—The last sentence of my Blake review (February 15) was misprinted. It should have read: "Too many of the commentators went one way for 'The Lamb' and 'The Tyger'."

MICHAEL MASON, 9, Thane Street, London WC1.

## Reading Henry James

Sir—A. N. Wilson, in his disagreeable and imperceptive notice of Susanne Kappeler's book on Henry James (February 6), remarks that as "a true pupil" of mla she realizes that a narrative, "if worried at sufficiently, will yield up its hermeneutic secrets". This appears to be a sarcastic allusion to my book *The Genesis of Secrecy*, a work disliked by many but by none, so far as I can gather, thought to lack lucidity. Since its argument is approximately the precise opposite of the view Wilson attributes to me, we may reasonably conclude that no one need pay much attention to what he says of Dr Kappeler's book. James, by the way, thought the reader should do half the work of a novel; Dr Kappeler is trying to explain what that demand entails, but such explanations will not be to the pleasure of anyone who has read the novel. I wish you would tell your reviewers that you already know how much easier it is to sneer than to think, and that you pay them to think.

FRANK KERMODE, King's College, Cambridge CB2 1ST.

## Anglo-French

Sir—In his interesting review of some of Plautus's correspondence (January 30) Victor Brombert writes of Plautus's belief that "... art could only come into being when the artist... accepted to die to life".

Readers of French will have understood this at a second glance, others at a third, but it is still, as I'm sure Professor Brombert will agree, a fine and useful French idiom. Many writers in English on French themes and ideas are thus afflicted, and the degeneration of syntax is the chief symptom rather than, as in Plautus, that of vocabulary. The condition sets in as veneration of the Word, and the reader rapidly to a state of mind in which it is felt that no other words will do (than those used in the foreign text) and thus to literal "translation" which is of course no translation at all, and thus to solecisms like the use of an infinitive after "to accept".

J. W. BRUGEL, 21 Cannaught Drive, London NW11 6BL.

If English grammar and syntax are to receive more attention in teaching both at school and university it is to be hoped that translation in the true sense will also be given greater emphasis; even poetry is sometimes capable of being translated, and anything else worth saying or writing surely must be.

S. F. STERN, 83 Barton Road, Cambridge.

## Brecht

Sir—Re "Brecht and Auden" (Letter, February 6), we agree with D. J. Enright on two counts: that we did "not mean to suggest that [he] claimed that Auden withdrew from the translation of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* before Brecht had finished writing the play..." (our italics); and that it is unsafe to assume that all readers even of the TLS know everything. Indeed, we cannot "rectify" the accuracy of James K. Lyon's account of the translation of this play as summarized by Enright, simply because though we assumed that this was more or less what had occurred, we ourselves did not "know everything". We therefore wish to express our gratitude to both Lyon and Enright for enlightening us.

The moral of this brief encounter would seem to be: beware of confusion.

TANIA AND JAMES STERN, Hatch Manor, Tishbury, Wiltshire.

Sir—D. J. Enright quotes (January 16) from James K. Lyon's *Brecht in America* Brecht's answer to Helene Weigel's complaint about the difficulties in the life of women, namely "Men shave".

As in so many other cases of his literary production, Brecht was not even original in this privately made remark. He had simply taken over an earlier aphorism by Kurt Tucholsky, which went (freely translated) "Certainly, this lot of women is not an easy one, but we men have to shave". Karl Kraus has characterized this behaviour in an untranslatable manner: "Als Knahe sei er oft an der Quelle gewesen, und habe sie niemals angeben."

J. W. BRUGEL, 21 Cannaught Drive, London NW11 6BL.

## Among this week's contributors

GERALD ABRAHAM's *The Concise Oxford History of Music* was published last year.

ANTHONY BURGESS gave the 1980 E. S. Elst Memorial Lecture "Black Sea of Sirs: Thoughts on Music and Literature" at the University of Kent. His symphonies have been performed in the United States; his *Mr W. S.—A Ballet* was broadcast on BBC Radio 3 in 1978 and his opera *The Blooms of Dublin* will be broadcast next year.

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North Wales at Bangor. He is the author of *Metaphor*, 1971.

SIR JOHN HACKETT's books include *The Third World War*, 1978.

JOHN KEEGAN's books include *The Foca of Battle*, 1976.

PETER KEATING's *The Victorian Preacher: A Reader from Carlyle to H. G. Wells* will be published shortly.

VIRGINIA LEWELLYN SMITH's *Anton Chekhov and the Lady with the Dog* was published in 1973.

DAVID LONDON's most recent novel is *How Far Can You Go?*, 1980. His *The Modes of Modern Writing* was published in 1977.

COLIN MACCABE is editing *The Cambridge Lectures on Joyce* to be published by Harvester Press. His most recent book is *James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word*, 1979.

MICHAEL MASON is a lecturer in English at University College London.

DENIS MATTHEWS is Professor of Music at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. His books include *Keyboard Music*, 1972.

WILFRED MELLER's *Book and the Dance of God* is reviewed in this issue.

JOHN MOLE's most recent collection of poems is *From the House Opposite*, 1979.

BLAKE MORRISON's critical study *The Movement* was published last year.

J. MORDAUNT CROOK's books include *The Greek Revival: Neo-Classical Attitudes in British Architecture* 1760-1870, 1972.

## 'Dark Interpreter'

Sir—Rosemary Ashton's review of my book *Dark Interpreter* (January 9) contains some major factual errors and omissions which I must bring to your attention. The book does not draw "chiefly" on Schiller. A cursory perusal of its dust-jacket, the index, or the first and fourth chapters will show that I devote at least as much attention to Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation*, and considerably more to Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*. Indeed, I would have been foolish if I had tried to base my disagreement with Abrams's view of romanticism solely on a text which he uses as one of the principal sources of his argument.

The mistaken view that I write from the perspective of Schiller is also responsible for the criticism that I "puzzlingly" oppose the word "sentimental" to "romantic", when Schiller himself identifies the two terms. Since I use the word "romantic" descriptively to cover the poetry written in the period and since I use the term "sentimental" in its "ironic" and "tragic" (taken from Nietzsche) to describe styles of awareness characteristic of poems written at different points in this evolution of romanticism, it is hardly surprising that I "puzzlingly" oppose the word "sentimental" to "romantic".

Finally, she suggests that I engage in a somewhat mystical exegesis of the fragmentary nature of the fragment occupies about 5 per cent of the book. Moreover, the statement cited as evidence of my Germanicly excessive taste for the fragment is, ironically, an exposition of a view which I actually disavow. Ms Ashton should have noted that I point out (page 184) that there are "obvious problems" with the reading of romantic fragments which she cites.

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# The soprano on show

By Patrick O'Connor

W. PORTER WARE and THADDEUS C. LOCKARD Jr.  
P. T. Barnum Presents Jenny Lind  
The American Tour of the Swedish Nightingale  
204pp. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press. \$20.  
0 8071 0687 9

The American years of Jenny Lind were first recounted by C. G. Rosenberg in a little book called *Jenny Lind in America*, published in 1851, as well as by P. T. Barnum himself in his memoirs, *Struggles and Triumphs*. Until the appearance of this new book, these were the prime sources of information about events which were to set a pattern for a whole genre of star-making in their previous collaboration in this field. *The Last Letters of Jenny Lind* (Collected, 1966), the authors wrote: "The new book tells us that there are many fascinating details waiting to be discovered." Evidently the last fifteen years have been fruitful for them: they have produced a substantial volume which is as much a tribute to Lind and Barnum as it is to the air of excitement with which the Americans always received even the most outlandish examples of nineteenth-century European artistic endeavour.

It is pleasantly ironic that Lind, a lady of classic Victorian morality who longed to disassociate herself from what she thought of as the "sinful" stage, should have achieved her fame through her partnership with "the greatest showman on Earth". Although dedicated to publicity and profit-making, Barnum was a complete Victorian himself; what he came to be thought of as old-world courtesy, scrupulous honesty and restraint combined to make him the ideal impresario for Jenny Lind. Despite her plous, retiring nature she was as eager as the most voracious prime donna to earn as much as possible in the service of her charities, especially the academy for girls that she had founded in Stockholm. Barnum's circus antics in publishing the tour may have perturbed her from time to time, but she never complained. She was aware that it was those very practices which made sure that every American, in a country in which she had been unknown for six months before, should be aware of her passage through their midst.

A wag of the day summed up the situation neatly when he rhymed: So Jenny, come along I year's just the card for me, Aed quit these kings and queens, for the country of the free;

We'll welcome you with speeches, and serenades, and rockets, And you will touch their hearts, and I will tell their pockets; And if between us the public isn't skinned, Why my name isn't Barnum, nor your name Jenny Lind!

It was exactly what did happen. In her arrival in New York on September 18, 1850, a crowd of twenty thousand stood before her hotel until nine in the evening, in the hope of catching a glimpse of her. At midnight two hundred local musicians accompanied her from the street accompanied by twenty companies of New York firemen bearing torches. This was not an isolated instance, the tour seemed to inspire romantic gestures. For instance, on September 26 Jenny and her entourage boarded the Empire State steamer to travel from New York to Boston in the early hours of the morning, while the boat was passing Fort Adams, the officers there played a serenade as a compliment to the singer—because of the late hour few of the passengers were aware of what was taking place and Jenny herself was asleep. It seems symbolic of the whole tour; even with the enormous publicity and enthusiasm, Lind came here with little idea of the great impression these concerts were to make.

All was not entirely sweetness and light—the good manners and old-fashioned charm were complemented by hissing crowds in Havana, disaffected audiences in inadequate auditoriums and angry crowds who had either failed to obtain tickets at all or who had been turned away by ticket touts. More than once the soprano had to make an undignified exit through the back window of a building to avoid a wrathful public.

This tour remained for Lind the most momentous of her career, for during it she was reunited with Otto Goldschmidt, a young musician whose acquaintance she had made in Germany the previous year. He joined the troupe halfway through the tour; six months later he and Jenny were married in Boston on February 5, 1852. A reporter of the *New York Home Journal* wrote punningly: "With what she has seen of the world and of this land for husbands, Jenny Lind has probably come round to whence she started—choosing by the instinct of her heart. Her Otto-biography will show how wisely."

At this stage of her voyage, the supporting soloists remained constant, under the watchful eye of Julius Benedict who conducted all the concerts. Throughout the tour, Lind was accompanied by the two flautists who played double obbligato in the *La Camp in Siazia*, so popular was

this scene from a cantata totally forgotten even amidst today's bel canto revival. Despite the inclusion of this and other operatic items, and the Handel and Mendelssohn oratorio which Lind loved to sing, the real show-stoppers were the "Bird Song", the "Herdman's Song", the inevitable "Home, Sweet, Home" and the "Swedish Echo Song" which one critic blithely referred to as being of the "Tyrolean stamp".

By modern standards her recitals were extraordinarily short—six items per concert sung by Lind herself, the selection varying from town to town but with one of the favourites always on the programme. I would have liked a catalogue of her entire repertoire on this tour as one of the appendices (which include a further selection of "lost letters")—it would be interesting to see how far-ranging the musical tastes of America allowed her to be. At the end of her stay, when she was no longer under Barnum's management but arranging things in the quiet way that befitted a newly-wedded matron, a correspondent begged her to include more uplifting music with which to educate her audience—not taking into account the necessity of also entertaining them.

Late in her life (she died in 1887) Jenny Lind is supposed to have made an isolated reference to one of the earliest phonograph machines. Of course this has not survived—even if it had, the primitive recording would be inadequate to give us a hint of what the voice was like. It is therefore to contemporary accounts, several of which are reprinted in this volume, to which one must turn to establish what exactly it was about her voice which so captivated a whole generation, both in Europe and America—in an era which had heard Lind, Grieg and Sontag, just three of the more celebrated prima donnas who sang the same repertoire.

The reviewer of the *Daily American* in Nashville, where Jenny sang on March 31, 1851, gives one of the most vivid descriptions:

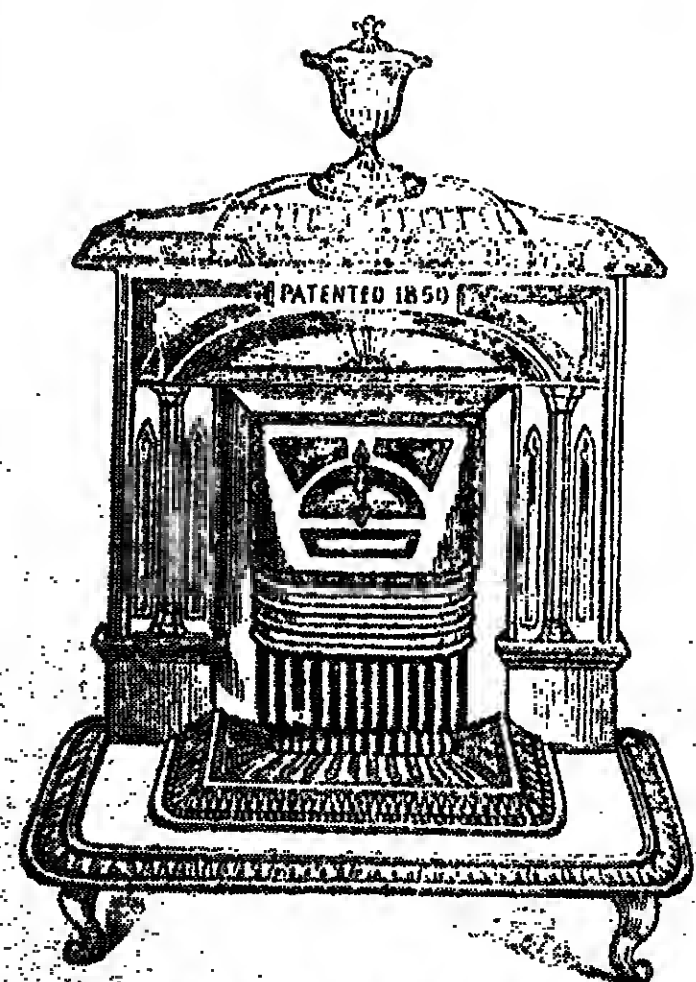
"The extreme burst of her voice in the upper portion of its register later in her career, the ordinary range of sopranos and she has acquired the power of moulding the higher notes entirely at her will. By this she is enabled to produce some of the most notable effects upon the listener. When the voice is raised through the lower and more ordinary compass of the voice she bursts forth in tones clearer and higher than we have ever before heard from any singer, her power completely astounds the audience. Another of the more special beauties which particularly

mark the voice of Miss Lind is the unexampled quality and delicacy of its piano... as for her trills nothing could be more correct—more rapid—or more thoroughly musical. The transition from the high to the low notes is rapidly effected and seems as though it cost her no effort."

The favour, passionate intensity and even abandon of her singing are described in this and other reviews quoted. These are qualities not usually associated with a singer best remembered usually for her perfect and even vocalism.

Lind's American tour may seem like a fly-speck on the panorama of musical history, but the authors have such single-minded interest

## The Jenny Lind PORTABLE PARLOR GRATE,



The most admired of any stove now on exhibition at the great Fair in Boston.

A "Jenny Lind" stove as advertised in the *Portsmouth (New Haven) Journal* of October 19, 1850, from the book reviewed here.

and devotion that they engage the attention over many trivial transactions. There is one phenomenon of publicity which is not explained—that of naming quite unrelated goods for sale after the artist. Jenny Lind bonnets are understandable, but cooking stoves and house blenders seem unreasonable. Was Barnum in fact the father of this seemingly modern money-making device which was embraced with such enthusiasm by the "pop" merchants of our own time? Professors Lockard and Ware are to be congratulated on writing a book which odds considerably on the more recent work of the male participants but of music making and showmanship in America before the Civil War.

points to its aesthetic consequences: a restoration of the distinction between life and accompaniment; a restoration of the tutti as a harmonic frame of a piece; a formal validation of such distinctive features as a strident ostinato and the use of "choreo" or "dysrhythmic" variations. Earlier works, which fell outside Northcott's purview, do not always get their due. The highly individualized qualities of Pastorale op 15, or of the op 24 Romenza for solo and orchestra, are not satisfactorily dealt with by Julian Rushton in his lengthy description of the orchestral music. Hugh Wood's (1965) essay on the choral works is bland, descriptive approbation. Peter Paul Nash's consideration of the chamber music is probing and suggestive, but tortuous in expression and often abstruse. Bill Hopkins's treatment of the solo piano pieces is attentive, to detail but weak in its judgment, and his style, on the whole, is horribly verbose. Melanie Dalen supplies a clipped, clear account of the music-theatre *Triptych* (1966-70); and David Drew an energetic investigation of Goehr's only full-scale opera to date, *Arden* (*Arden* is in progress). A new, very grand opera, *Arden*, is in progress, which will embrace the recently premiered choruses *Arden* the Great is *Arden*. The implications of this project, both musical and dramatic, are the subject of a second, and concluding interview with the composer.

Though provocative, Holloway's critique shines out here as a model of how to write on music; bold, evaluative, handling musical complexity in a clear, untechnical manner. Too frequently in this book we are reduced to the level of technical programme-notes which tediously describe what is plain to hear anyway. If one is going to write technically, Bevan's recent discussion of Goehr's recent music obituarism may be done. An explanation of some of the information, explanation and comment is here compressed, let's say, into a dozen pages; sometimes too densely for leisurely reading it is true, but invariably repaying the close attention. Works are not described but played and evaluated in their context. Northcott's claim to fathom what Holloway calls Goehr's "cross-pollination of series and mode"—that harmonic discovery of the Two Choruses of 1962 after which Goehr's music "simply was"—and, more important,

seriously-articulated, punctuated, mark, but his passionate defiance of music as "feeling and movement" or as "glorious mud", is a little too personal. In any case, it allows that Goehr's hesitancy and asceticism are put to creative use in the best pieces ("Polignat" feeling is rendered through starvation of the medium employed). Holloway ends, back-peddling, by praising Goehr for the very thing—exploring to a classical "grammar"—that he seemed earlier to have been condemning him for.

Two years before Alexander Goehr's fifteenth birthday, a small symposium has appeared to examine the nature of a genuine, already substantial oeuvre. It is an overdue tribute, but then Goehr's conservatism has earned him little favour. In the 1950s he was a figure symbolic of the new life then being shaken into English music—enough to be the 1951 Leeds Festival, with his coateate Suter's Gold, to be chosen through his father Walter Goehr, of the teachings of Schoenberg; disseminator of the innovations of Messiaen and the revolutionary propositions of Boulez; now he is assumed, as a Cambridge professor, to be rigidifying in the academy. But Goehr had always drawn back from "the narrower, more modest avant-garde world". "I had," he testifies in the first of two interviews that begin and end the present volume, "never entirely lost at Darmstadt. I was going the way they [Boulez, Schoenberg and Messiaen] did, not always agreeing with them, but I was always with them."

## The avant-garde conservative

By Paul Driver

BAYAN NORTHCOAT (Editor):  
The Music of Alexander Goehr  
112pp. Schott's. £29S.  
0 9019 3805 X

Two years before Alexander Goehr's fifteenth birthday, a small symposium has appeared to examine the nature of a genuine, already substantial oeuvre. It is an overdue tribute, but then Goehr's conservatism has earned him little favour. In the 1950s he was a figure symbolic of the new life then being shaken into English music—enough to be the 1951 Leeds Festival, with his coateate Suter's Gold, to be chosen through his father Walter Goehr, of the teachings of Schoenberg; disseminator of the innovations of Messiaen and the revolutionary propositions of Boulez; now he is assumed, as a Cambridge professor, to be rigidifying in the academy. But Goehr had always drawn back from "the narrower, more modest avant-garde world". "I had," he testifies in the first of two interviews that begin and end the present volume, "never entirely lost at Darmstadt. I was going the way they [Boulez, Schoenberg and Messiaen] did, not always agreeing with them, but I was always with them."

magazine *The Score*, he was inserting common sense into the prevailing clouds of dogma and absurdity. An artist is related to the tradition from which he comes, and this bond has little to do with time or progress. There is no common "only way" to any future stage; all art is new art and all art is conservative."

Against Darmstadt's insistence on pre-determination and the co-ordination of a work of all compositional possibilities, Goehr emphasized the restriction of possibilities as demanded by any specific material and individual inventiveness. To the infusion of Cageism itself, he replied with his own "chance operations": "Our two books are full of examples of exceptions; strange harmonic proportions, old contrapuntal combinations, which, we feel, enhance the expression of the composer's mind, vague memories of music, and a new, conscious, creative idea." Answering Pierre Boulez in the TLS (June 10, 1977) he wrote: "When do technical problems kill spontaneity and fantasy? How can the freshness of a *trouvé* be retained in coherent development? In falling to deal with these problems, creating what appears accidentally as a distortion or non-regular, we imagine, the same problem (Boulez's term) of our time."

Another spokesman from his *Score* article runs: "Analysis should only

## Harmony and humanity

By Wilfrid Mellers

MARY CHAN

Musical in the Theatre of Ben Jonson  
397pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £25.  
0 1912632 8

Music and Tempest, those archetypal symbols which pervade the poetic dramas of Shakespeare, weave a web that deeply affects us because the interactions of the two come to us through the feelings, thoughts and actions of particular human creatures. But although Shakespeare's genius, in the context of the plays, alchemizes metaphysical abstractions into flesh and blood, generalized symbols nonetheless helped to shape the world of Shakespeare's music.

The most of Music and Tempest, syncretism with Order and Chaos, moulded a Renaissance social philosophy—which Renaissance masque formulated in theatrical projection, creating a ritual of humanism. It is thus no accident that Ben Jonson, the most intellectually "conscious" philosopher of the great Elizabethan dramatists and Jacobean, should have devoted himself with more or less equal energy to drama and to the masque. As a playwright he favoured satiric veins; negatively in that he pricked bubbles of social pretence and presumption, positively in that he did so by reference to concepts of order and of value. View of order as a social ideal as well as idea he "laid forth" in his masques, which represent not what was but what we might, indeed ought to be.

The snag lies in the fact that as rituals of humanism masques remain metaphors. Individual human beings are not put to the test, reduced to the fire, as they are in Shakespeare's plays. In so far as Jonson's court could emulate the "real" people they are usually either villainous or inept, and are therefore either destructive or inept in the fulfilled human hero-masque that his masque-philosophy envisaged. This is why Jonson's achievement, though powerfully impressive, has not been fully appreciated. We learn from

Jonson's plays much of human creases, malignancy and folly that is directly relevant to us today; but by his vision of Good we are not changed, even in the twinkling of an eye, as we are by Shakespeare's redemptive insights.

Mary Chan's book is important because it is the first attempt comprehensively to analyse the relationship between Jonson's plays and his masques. She sets the stage with a chapter on music in the pre-Jonsonian era of the Elizabethan theatre, commenting on the ways in which elements, battle-pieces, pastoral dialogues, catches, dances and polyphonic consorts were employed mostly as conventionalized interludes, though occasionally with symbolic intent. All this material is familiar, but is here neatly presented; as are the brief accounts of the leading composers—the two Ferraboscos, Robert Johnson and Nicholas Lanier—who were to be Jonson's main associates.

Jonson inherited these musical traditions, but was not a man to employ them adventitiously. True, his first two Humour plays offer no scope for music; but when, in *Cynthia's Revels* (presented in 1600), he first used it extensively, it was with clearly defined, if not totally convincing, purpose. The play is a hybrid between realistic drama and the allegorical mythology of masque, since it celebrates the "real" queen Elizabeth in the guise of an "ideal" goddess of music, and sees ideally at the time, against the backdrop of the time-serving courtiers. The music cuts both ways, at one moment embracing the temporality of a frivolously moribund human society in empty euphoric dance measures, at the next moment, incarnating the atemporal order of a spiritual vision, unrealized but not necessarily unrealizable. The play is about "the moral significance of bad poetry," as Dr Chan puts it, and ends with the hope that if the ineffectually reformed people of Cynthia's court could emulate the example of the Queen herself, good poetry and the good life might be restored. Dr Chan makes a case for the piece's merits without persuading us, or herself, that the dénouement is anything more than a wishful dream. Not without persuading, judging from the fact that he relinquished the hybrid con-

vention and, having found himself, said what he had to say either in the form of comedies that appear to use music ironically, or in masques in which the music in conjunction with the dance acts out the moral order that it supposed to justify the poetry. In masques negative emotions of ironic implication are banished to the periphery of the antimasque, and are dismissed in being rivetized; indeed antimasque music was so perfunctory that it was often improvised and seldom written down.

Not surprisingly, Jonson's use of music in his plays becomes subtler the more his imagination is engaged, and is richest in his masterpiece, *Volpone*. One cannot merely say that the Cox, singing of love and/or lust to Celio, is profane, or that he is because of the thought that sexual love may "die" in the act, the however enormity of humanity which the marvelous poetry purveys cannot be thus readily disposed of; especially when it is reinforced by Ferrabosco's eloquent, evocative music. Dr Chan's account of Volpone embraces literary and musical criticism of considerable perspicacity, helping us to understand how the play's reasonably human relevance depends on its moral ambiguities. In her discussion of *The Devil*, as Dr Chan is intermittently illuminating but more confusing in her handling of the moral issues. Perhaps Jonson himself was; but though Wittpol's exultant song "O! so soft O, so white O, so sweet is she!" carries ironic implications in their, what is he being performed? The trail enters, unseen by Wittpol, one cannot maintain that the gustatory imagery presents the girl merely as a choice morsel to be gobbled up. The tenderness of the verbal rhythm, enhanced by the rarefied loveliness of the music, suggests a spiritual setting (assuming it was written for the theatrical performance), reveals spiritual illumination within corporeal delight. Jonson's perfection did not entirely escape temporal reality. Even though he did not fully understand the equation as Shakespeare did, he would not have been the great poet he is if he had claimed that no such equation existed. That Dr Chan is aware of it too is manifest in her admirable chapter on Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. She doesn't say that she includes

these plays, which might seem extraneous to her main theme, because they demonstrate what Jonson leaves out, or fails to grapple with. None the less, such is the effect of the chapter, in the context of the book. With Shakespeare, the masque's resurrections occur parenthetically, now as then, within individual human beings, including you and me; whereas Jonson's vision of a world reborn remains within the context of history.

Dr Chan's account of the Jonsonian masque, however, is introduced by a chapter on the philosophy of masque distilled from Cosgiffone's *Book of the Courtier*. The material is well-worn and perhaps less deeply revealing than Sidney's *Arcadia*; so the chapter is doubly justified if one regards the book as a contribution to the study of the play. This makes the play morally exhortatory, like Jonson's early work, but at a deeper level because prompted positively by love, instead of negatively by the vanishing of false appearances. So although in *The New Inn* redemption does not happen to us as it happens to us through the agency of Shakespeare's Lear, Hamlet, Alonso or even Caliban, we at least leave the theatre for the real world knowing what is at stake. Similarly in his last, unfinished theatre piece, *The Sad Shepherd*, Jonson returns to the pastoral convention with a difference, for it relates allegorical mythology to the mummings and seasonal festivals of demotic tradition. As Dr Chan puts it, "the countryside of Jonson's allegory is not a fantasy paradise, but is fully realized in verse which makes us back to the directness and sanity of Jonson's praise of country life in *To Pensance*." Again, it is once again a strange and limitation. No wonder this shepherd is sad, making verse that is simultaneously sad and valedictory; as the wayside graffiti has it: "Nostalgia ain't what it used to be."

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## The composer's hand

By Dennis Matthews

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN:  
Opus 59 No. 1  
f80. 0 85967 546 7  
Opus 59 No. 2  
f75. 0 85967 547 5  
Edited by Alan Tyson  
Scholar Press.

The first two of Beethoven's "Razumovsky" Quartets mark the impressive launching of a new series of music facsimiles by the Scholar Press. The remaining one, op 59 no 3, is promised later as part of a continuing enterprise that seeks to make available a number of hitherto unpublished autographs. Many potential buyers will be put off by the prices, which are high even by inflationary standards. They are, however, commensurate with the high quality of production, which includes the use of multi-colour printing to distinguish the different links and crayons of the original. Such niceties are in line with the high standards of the original. Beethoven's first quartet, op 59 no 1, has long been admired for its musical perfection, and in general and its work on Beethoven's autograph. Not so long ago he applied his skill to the manuscripts of Mozart's "Prussian" Quartets and talked about his findings on re-notation, stressing the importance of watermarks, paper-weights.

In recent years photostats and microfilm have aided study, though there may be secrets in the original that elude such easy methods of conveyance. The Scholar Press and Dr Tyson between them demand a higher standard of re-notation and the introductory notes to the first of the quartets, op 59 no 1, are a welcome help to the reader, however, have helped to make more detailed commentary, page by page, from Dr Tyson. The penul-

mate page of the first movement of op 59 no 1, with its loag-held high C in the first violin and scratched-out downward scales, is just one of many places to confuse the student and invite expert comment.

Even the final autograph of a work, though seemingly sacrosanct, may contain uncertainties, alterations and uncertainties. In some cases it may not even represent the composer's last word, since changes can still be made at the proof-reading stage. This is not to underrate the immense importance of the manuscript, which must in any case have an antecedent appeal for the music-lover quite apart from its intrinsic value. It is moving to witness, as it were, the actual pen-strokes that preserved masterpieces. It is a valuable exercise in appreciation to deduce the reasons for the crossings-out and changes of mind that were liable in Beethoven's case to continue or overflow from the sketchbooks into the fair copy itself. "Fair copy" is however hardly the term to apply to many of Beethoven's first drafts. One hardly needs to look at his original publishers, yet close inspection shows a craving for musical perfection beneath and beyond the superficial appearance of chaos. For Beethoven himself there can seldom have been any doubt about the ultimate location of a dot or slur, the extent of a phrase-mark, or the other dynamic marks. Such details were so important to him as the notes themselves.

The first "Razumovsky", as Dr Tyson points out, is on a spacious timescale as it stands, reflecting the "new symphonic of Beethoven's" followed in the *Gracia* Symphony. Yet it is abandoned the normal first-movement repeat, had the rarity of a through-composed scherzo (without trio or "da capo"), and only the first page, from Dr Tyson. The penul-

Among the fascinations of the autograph are some projected but cancelled repeat-signs in all these movements, including the large-scale repetition of the first movement's development and recapitulation—an unusual survivor of binary form that was preserved in the finale of the "Appassionata" Sonata of the same period. Occasionally Beethoven cancelled a page and re-wrote it, substituting a new page for a point that is not made clearly in the very brief preface to the E minor Quartet. Here, as in op 59 no 1, the facsimile shows the self-critical Beethoven at work to the last, reshaping inner voices and even extending or shortening musical paragraphs. From the first bar to the last the attention is riveted end, it is hoped, understanding enhanced. Every quarter player should note the painstaking changes in the scoring of the opening two chords and their enharmonic contribution on the repeat, crammed in as so unpremeditated bar at the end of the exposition. At the end of the finale the manuscript shows a dramatic harmonic departure that Beethoven cancelled in favour of the present conclusion.

The availability of such facsimiles, despite their cost, should help to bridge the traditional gap between musicology and practical musicianship. A glance at any page of these two quartets gives an insight into Beethoven's creative world that no printed page can offer. It is equally certain that the printed page will never look the same again in the light of such a study.



# The numerical and the numinous

By Martin Cooper

WILFRID MELLERS:  
Bach and the Dance of God  
324pp. Faber. £15.  
0 571 11562 4

It is a commonplace in the history of the arts that each generation discovers, or rediscovers, a new aspect of the greatest artists' work, and in so doing discovers something of its own identity. The twentieth century has altogether reappraised Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and indeed Bach, as Wilfrid Mellers recognizes in his new book. Bach as "an invention of nineteenth-century romanticism," "good churchman and pious advocate of dogma" was demolished at least thirty years ago, and no doubt rightly. It is Professor Mellers's belief, however, that "no one with ears to hear can doubt that Bach was a religious composer, and that his religious springs from the depths of the human psyche, rather than from a topical local creed." In the present work he sets out to prove this in detail, by giving us the chapter and verse—arguing, that is to say, from key-signatures, tempo, rhythm, interval and overall structure of individual movements, and by applying systems of visual, numerical and doctrinal symbolism known to have existed in the composer's day. The music was examined over the St John Passion and the Mass in B Minor, but he also considers the unaccompanied cello suites, the Goldberg Variations and a number of preludes and fugues from the "48".

Professor Mellers's presuppositions and methods are very nearly identical with those of medieval interpreters of the Bible. For both him and them every text has a secondary significance besides that of plain statement, and in each case the allegory is theological or didactic, often both. Professor Mellers's terms of allegorical reference are of course wider than those of the Schoolmen and include pre-Christian theologies, notably Christian psychology, chiefly Jungian. In the cello suites, for instance, which he regards as an "apothecosis of the dance," he sees a man-woman relationship between bow and instrument, female substances wooed by male "will," corporeal motifs and rhythms alternating with metaphysical contemplation. In the B Minor prelude and fugue from Book 1 of the "48", harmonic emotionalism alternates with contrapuntal (intellectual) responses to create a humanized spirituality. For him, as for the Schoolmen, there is a synergy where an indissoluble link between the text (musical in the one case, literary in the other), theological allegory and didactic purpose, musical in the one case and moral in the other.

The music of the Passioe and the Mass plainly—and more plausibly—lend itself to this system of hermeneutics. While many readers may find the interpretations purely instrumental music poetic

and fanciful, subjectively revealing rather than intellectually compelling, only the prejudiced will reject outright the presence of extra-musical references in the Passions and the Mass. As Professor Mellers shows, references of this kind formed part of a tradition that Bach inherited and employed, often no doubt unconsciously. An instance of this is the Trinitarian imagery which is the most obvious example of numerological symbolism. Thus, in the St John Passion, the author distinguishes the E flat major (third flat) of supernatural suffering from the G minor of human suffering, and he even finds a "trinity of quaternities" in 12/8 metres. Cryptography of this kind is, of course, notoriously easy to discover and may be abused. It is not to be believed that in one of the turbo interventions in the Passion "Bach points this o priori nature of law by a little number symbolism, for when the crowd yells that it is not lawful for them to put any man to death, the theme on the word 'not' consists of five rising chromatic notes in reference to the fifth commandment, while the tenfold repetition of the phrase reminds us that there are ten commandments in all."

Nor am I convinced that the forty-nine bars of the "Crucifixus" were determined in the composer's mind (still less in his sub-conscious) by the fact that 49=7 x 7, and seven is traditionally a "sacred" number.

## Unpatriotic ironies

By Gerald Abraham

BULAT OKUDZHAVA:  
65 Songs/65 Pesen (bilingual)  
174pp. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Ardis.  
\$18.50.  
0 88233 637 1

A case of "the singer, not the song". Ten thousand Russians can't be wrong.

In this distance the singer is Bulat Okudzhava, born in 1924 in Moscow of a Georgian father and Armenian mother. After war service he entered the Faculty of Philology of Mskii University, graduating in 1950, and worked in the Kaluzhskaya area as a teacher in a village school and later as a journalist. He had already been writing verses and in 1956 he published a collection of them, *Livka*. At about this time he returned to Moscow and began to sing his verses to his own guitar accompaniment in a circle of friends. His confessions, "I'm not a guitarist and I'm not a singer, I don't know how to write music, and my compositions have little relation to the concert platform." (Quoting Shapovalov's letter to him, *Okudzhava*.) A few words about Bulat Okudzhava: to this volume, arranged as "Okudzhava evening" in a small hall of the Leningrad House of Art in 1960. In his agita-

tion half the words were lost, someone shouted "Rubbish!" and despite some applause he took his guitar and left the stage. ("This was my first big public appearance." (But on the facing page of this illustrated volume is a photograph showing Okudzhava at a microphone and captioned "House of Writers 1956.") "Guitarists accused me of being unrefined, composers of lacking professionalism, singers of having no voice, and all of them of effrontery and vulgarity.... Schoolchildren accused me of pessimism, anti-patriotism.... The press supported them."

When in 1968 the critic Vladimir Frumkin took twenty-five of Okudzhava's songs to the State Publishing House they were not brought out in their original forms but the poems were handed to Matvey Blanter, the acknowledged master of Soviet popular song, who set them to fresh music. According to Frumkin, Blanter "forced them into intentions absolutely foreign to them." The verses sounded strangled and bad. The underlying implications disappeared and Okudzhava's melancholy irony evaporated. And when a Polish selection of twenty songs was published as *Crocus* in 1970 "its authors obviously wished to create concert versions of the songs; melody and (particularly) accompaniment were subjected to substantial reworking foreign to the original." Yet, performed by himself, Okudzhava's songs have apparently become very popular and actually generated a new wave of Soviet song.

Here we have sixty-five specimens and we can judge for ourselves. Or can we? Frumkin has written down the voice parts and the sketchiest indication of guitar accompaniments, and Eve Shapiro has added to the original texts translations "literal enough to allow students to understand the songs verse by verse, line by line," yet "reaching toward a more poetic intuition of the character of the songs." The result is tantalizing. Okudzhava is not a bad poet and he is literate—he has written novels, short stories, and a play—yet he is illiterate. Frumkin has no doubt set down as faithfully as possible what he sings and plays. Frumkin himself advises

## The baton's beat

By Hilary Finch

PETER FIRIE:  
Furtwängler and the Art of Conducting  
149pp. Duckworth. £9.95.  
0 7156 3485 X

"I remember Hitler turning to Furtwängler and telling him that he would have to allow himself to be used by the party for propaganda purposes, and I remember Furtwängler refusing. Hitler got angry and told Furtwängler that in that case there would be a concentration camp ready for him. Furtwängler was silent for a moment and then said: 'In that case, Herr Reichschancellor, I will be in very good company.'"

Friedrich Wegener's words are quoted in *Wahndi. Monstrum Unfinished Journey*, a book which, in many ways, tells us more, and more accurately, in ten of its pages, about the personal and musical character of one of Germany's greatest, and most controversial, conductors than Peter Firie's book does in over a hundred.

We learn, it is true, about Furtwängler's early days as a conductor of Beethoven, Bruckner and Wagner, about the way his reputation changed as he grew older, the way his accounts of the same work often differ widely from each other, of his championing of Mahler and Shostakovich, of his first performance with the composer's *Symphony No. 1* in 1925, of his skill as both instrumentalist and leader, of his collaboration with Menhin, Flischer and Schwetzkopf.

But the book's main weakness

and the reason for its inability to do justice to its title lies in its title. It is built round what the author calls a "minute analysis" of Furtwängler's recorded performances in choicest stretches from Haydn and Mozart to Bruckner and Mahler, so that the highly road like an amplified and subjectively coloured discography, or a collection of record reviews, at their best thorough and conscientious, at their worst imprecisely subjective.

Mr Firie's tendency to eulogize, to make his observations fit what are frequently perilously dogmatic preconceptions, weakens the usefulness of the operation (and in the context of increasingly available deletions and re-releases of Furtwängler it can indeed be useful). Perhaps, Firie reflects, "one is being unfair to Tchaikovsky when one wonders what he, earth Furtwängler, saw in him. He was so very un-Furtwänglerish a composer." Perhaps recurring stylistic infidelities and perhaps the epithet "wunderbar" is perhaps the most meaningless and persistent (but not to the point) of his observations which are obviously the fruits of hours of listening.

The book's introduction and finale begin to reveal a more considered response to Furtwängler's particular musicianship and tell us more of what we want to know about his conducting technique, his influence on other conductors. But it is all too short, too repetitive, too vague. Berenboim, we are told, is his disciple: some investigation into the influence of Furtwängler on conductors like Abbado, Andrievsky, Davis, Mahler and Muti would have been a welcome addition. The book and told us more about the man himself.

## Turning the handle

By Anthony Burgess

SUSAN PALMER and SAMUEL PALMER:  
The Hurdy-Gurdy  
256pp. David and Charles. £15.  
0 7153 7888 0

Samuel Palmer is the son and Susan the mother. Samuel is an instrument maker. He made a hurdy-gurdy with which the mother fell in love. This book, exhaustive as to both text and (very beautiful) illustrations, is a pledge of love. In a brief foreword Professor Francis Baines (composer, leader of a consort of viols, hurdy-gurdy player) reports that "the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, say that scarcely a day goes by without inquiries concerning hurdy-gurdies. That can mean only one thing—that it is high time there was a book about them. And here it is." He might have said more—that the book is a labour of love and so on. For my part I do not think we shall need another book on the hurdy-gurdy for a long, long time. What we may need is a brief demonstration on radio or television of hurdy-gurdy playing—the sound, that is, as opposed to the mere technique. Mrs Palmer is an expert on the technique as on the history.

The very name of the instrument is a pejorative play on words, both its sound and its social status. Etymology? "C.18", says the new Collins: "Rhyming compound, probably of imitative origin." The name seems first to occur in print in Bonoli Thornton's "Ode on St Cecilia's Day" in 1749:

With dead, dull, doleful, heavy hums,  
And mournful groans,  
The sober hurdy-gurdy thrums.

Before that it had more dignified names—symphonio, sanfonio, chymonio, cymphan, syphonio, cyfonio, cyfonio, phonophono, fonofono. There seems to be a joycean confusion of *symphony* and *cliffion* in some of these terms, the cloth or rags connoting the beggars who played the instrument, though perhaps primarily the cloth-covering of the strings which ensured a sweet

hushed tone. This brings me, perhaps belatedly, to what the thing is and how it works.

It is a stringed instrument with a handle. The handle turns a hidden wheel against which the strings vibrate. There is a manual keyboard whose keys operate levers that shorten the strings and thus discourse melody. The keyboard has black keys which produce a diatonic scale, and white keys for chromatic inflections. The better class of hurdy-gurdy—like that used once by the French aristocracy—had or has two octaves; the lowlier or rural version had to be satisfied with one and a half. There is a tonic drone, as on bagpipas; a tonic-dominant drone is possible too. The effect, so far as I can judge, is of a one-stringed fiddle accompanied by a viola or cello playing on two open strings. I am assured that the sound is endearingly simple and altogether charming.

Its appearance is well recorded in pictorial art. A twelfth-century carving on the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela shows two kings or angels operating one hurdy-gurdy—sensible division of labour: one for grinding, the other for playing. In the eleventh-century *Book of Kings*, King David's harp is accompanied by a recognizable cymphan or phonophono. And so, in almost unbroken succession, up to 1979, with a picture of Samuel Palmer himself churning and flinging a very pejorative play on words, a smile of quiet religious rapture. Perhaps the most famous reproduction of the instrument is to be found in Hieronymus Bosch's *Hall*, where a miniature demon turns the handle but nobody attacks the key-board. We may term this an epideictic of a humble and harmless discourse of melody which gave much innocent pleasure during several centuries.

I can have nothing but praise for a book which fills in, so eruditely and charmingly, a gap in most people's musical and social knowledge. Admiration, too, for the publishers, who assuredly have produced no best-seller. What is now called for, I think, is a visit to Samuel Palmer's workshop in Whitby, where a demonstration of folk-song playing. His mother has done him proud.

## The whole gamut

By Alan Blackwood

MICHAEL KENNEDY (Editor):  
Oxford Concise Dictionary of Music  
724pp. Oxford University Press.  
£9.50 (paperback, £4.50)  
0 19 28161 5

In his Preface to this new edition, Michael Kennedy states that he has in some way revised every existing entry, as well as adding several hundred new ones. The result is to make a new edition so changed and enlarged as almost to constitute a new book.

The tone is set by the clean new typography and the removal of all those dead end not very instructive drawings of things like the Jew's harp and the Ocarina. Their disappearance, and the increased number of pages from 636 to 724, make room for all the new material. Electronic music in one of the beneficial, with related entries on computers to music and synthesizers; and one of the few new illustrations is a part of the diagrammatic score for *Musique pour Magnétique Tape No. 1* by the Polish composer Andrzej Dobrowolski. Another is a fascinating example of a fairly recent graphic score by the Greek composer Anestis Logothetis—"pictorially delightful if musically enigmatic" as the accompanying entry on the subject aptly puts it.

But it is in respect of the entries for composers where the greatest effort has been made. From Beethoven and Palestrina to Berlioz, Boulez, Stockhausen and other major figures of our time, all have benefited from extensive reassessment of their lives and work. Charles Ives is one who comes out of it at extremely well. Bartók, Stravinsky is among the abandoned. Also, comparisons are in many cases now clearly and systematically categorised, and the method of cross-referencing gene-

rally cleared up. The transliterated spelling of such Russians as Rakhmaninov and Skryabin has been brought into line with modern practice.

The relative length of individual composers' entries is, however, sometimes disconcerting. Within reason, the number of lines or words given to one composer as compared to another is a little thing to fuss about. But for Hindemith to receive 255 lines to Chopin's 74 does seem a little extreme. Indeed, his entry is one of the longest in the whole book, longer even than those for J. S. Bach and Beethoven.

The use of italics and quotation marks for nicknames (e.g. Moonlight Sonata or "Empress" Concerto) is not consistent. The list of abbreviations is incomplete. There is an entry for John Dankworth (most welcome), but not one for Cleo Laine despite the cross-reference. Burt Bacharach is correctly spelt for his own entry, but becomes Bert Bacharach in the entry on Film Music. Some other details are open to dispute; for example, Debussy's *Piano Prelude* General Lavigne—eccentric was almost certainly inspired by a real mudo like character, not a wooden puppet.

It would, admittedly, be a miracle if such a complex work of reference as this was free of all error. It is a pity about such slips all the same, since the general level of scholarship and organization of this new edition is high, and it is a vast improvement on the old.

Jeremy Moon's *The World of Romantic and Modern Musical Instruments* (1969, David and Charles, £10.50, 0 7153 7888 1) provides a very useful and up-to-date guide to changes in string, keyboard, woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments from the first half of the nineteenth century up to the development of electronic instruments in the 1920s and 1930s.

## Acts of Love

"Emily, in reply to Tabby's remonstrances, declared that, if he was found again transgressing, she herself, in defiance of warning and his well-known ferocity of nature, would beat him so severely that he would never offend again. In the gathering dusk of an autumn evening, Tabby came, half-triumphantly, half-tremblingly, but in great wrath, to tell Emily that Keeper was lying on the best bed, in drowsy voluptuousness. Charlotte saw Emily's whitening face, and set mouth, but dared not speak to interfere; no one dared when Emily's eyes glowed in that manner out of the paleness of her face, and when her lips were so compressed into stone. She went upstairs, and Tabby and Charlotte stood in the gloomy passage below, full of the dark shadows of coming night. Downstairs came Emily, dragging after her the unwilling Keeper, his hind legs set in a heavy attitude of resistance, held by the 'acute of his neck', but growling low and savagely all the time. The watchers would have spoken, but dared not, for fear of taking off Emily's attention, and causing her to avert her head for a moment from the enraged brute. She let him go, plucked in a dark corner of the bottom of the stairs; but there was there to fetch sick or rod, for fear of the strangling clutch at her throat—her bare clenched fist struck against his fierce red eyes, before he had time to make his spring, and, in the language of the turf, the 'punished him' till his eyes were swelled up, and the half-blind, astounded beast was led to his accustomed lair, to have his swelled head fomented and cared for by the very Emily herself."

Elizabeth Gaskell  
The Life of Charlotte Brontë

### 1: Traditional

What loving punishment the Lord could give,  
O dog's life in the Parsonage, dark ground  
where, in the typhus black, their Death could live!

Slab-sided judgment on the dismal tombs!  
Drear hopeless hymns, a stern-faced God that swaves,  
the actual shrivelled flesh they rhymed with—worms.

They were so little, childlike, small and bent,  
large roses, crooked mouths—the "dear remains"  
fitted a child's neat coffin, one long Lent

of self-denial all three sisters kept,  
killed by consumption and their dreadful drains.  
The words alone flashed out where rainstars wept!

### 2: Political

They really loved the Duke of Wellington,  
they were a nest of tiny troubled Tories—  
as colourful as parakeets and lories,

flaming with passion and Thy Will Be Done,  
yet in that free-for-all, that frolic misto,  
they didn't truly relish an adieu.

The cultured, polished people at the Grange,  
the "plaid silk frock", the "burnished shoes",  
"white trousers",  
meant nothing to these cats—they were all mousers

out on the moors and wild, far out of range.  
They never were a lukewarm, or smooth, like lotion,  
what they liked best was fierce untamed emotion.

Charlotte was adamant in saying how  
Jane Austen was all right, after a fashion,  
but very superficial, short of passion,

not "splitted on the horns of a mad cow"  
(a very telling phrase of Emily's)  
but quite at home in high-born families,

without "fresh air", "blue hill" or "bony back"—  
instead the fenced-in flowers, the fine "neat borders".  
Almost, all three preferred the lower orders.

### 3: Personal

Branwell alone, with the greatest regularity,  
filled the old Black Bull with Hibernian hilarity,  
just the coarsest sex with convivial vulgarity—  
they called him Patrick easily  
when drinkers filled the inn!

Branwell alone, taking opium with civility,  
quickly overturned all his painterly ability,  
oh, wasn't he the quare one, with his zalkative utility—  
they called him Patrick openly  
when drinkers filled the inn!

Branwell alone, in that gloomy old sorority,  
broke out in a male and a masculine minority,  
chasing after rail, with a fig for all authority—  
they called him Patrick drunkenly  
when drinkers filled the inn!

Branwell alone, with a drinking man's proclivity,  
chasing like a star as an agent of activity,  
acted out the dreams they repressed in their passivity—  
they called him Patrick praisingly  
when drinkers filled the inn!

Gavin Ewart

## Sound before sense

By Ian Davidson

GABRIELE BALDINI:  
The Story of Giuseppe Verdi  
Opera to Un Bello in Meschiera  
Translated and edited by Roger Parker.  
296pp. Cambridge University Press.  
£14.50 (hardback, £4.50).  
0 521 2391 1

Gabriele Baldini was not strictly speaking a musical expert; he was, rather, a literary academic, and a delight in English literature. In his *Story of Giuseppe Verdi*, first published in 1967, ten years ago, he argues for the primacy of the musical over the literary in the development of Verdi. Unfortunately he died before it was completed, and not far further than Baldini's brief fragment on Verdi.

The result is provocative and

stimulating but not really satisfactory. The problem is not that Baldini comes up with some unorthodox judgments as on the relative merits of Verdi's operas, though that he certainly does: *Macbeth* he takes to be superior to *Otello*, *Simon Boccanegra* is thoroughly mediocre, while *Un Bello in Meschiera* Verdi seems to rate himself above all previous work.

The difficulty is that he fails to substantiate his judgments precisely by those musical tests which he claims to put first. He dismisses the dramatic evidence of the libretto where it suits him (as in *Tragic*), to argue the purely musical case for this opera's greatness; but when he comes to discuss *Un Bello in Meschiera*, the work which with *Il Trovatore* represents his greatest achievement—he uses the libretto as the central plank in his argument. His advocacy for *Bella* is not a particularly eloquent and his notion that *Ocar* is somehow an other-worldly thing goes for Riccardo, while *Unica* plays a similar rôle for Amelia, throws an

illuminating light on a work which does not, for all Baldini's eloquence, match up to his estimation of it.

If we read about opera, we would like to know why it affects us, why it does—why we are moved, why we are excited by hearing singing. *Di quella vita*, or *Milano*, and *Wagner singing Verdi* (there is obviously some connection between the physical experience of a drama, and the playing out of a drama, and the link may be as simple as Baldini suggests). But he would have been kinder to his readers if he had taken more seriously the vulgar but difficult task of registering what it is that Verdi does to us, and how.

Every so often, as in his discussion of the use of different voice registers and combinations, Baldini is stimulating; at other times, however, his judgments will undoubtedly wish to add the book to their collection, but it will not do for those who are already thoroughly acquainted with his works.











